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THE Nation.

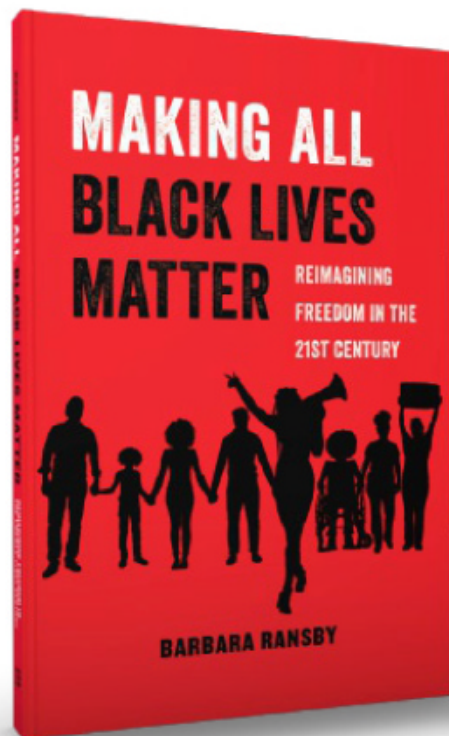
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(AND WILL AGAIN)

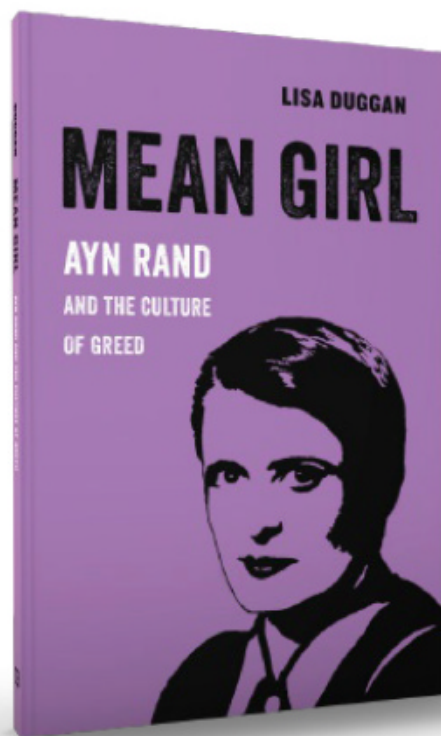
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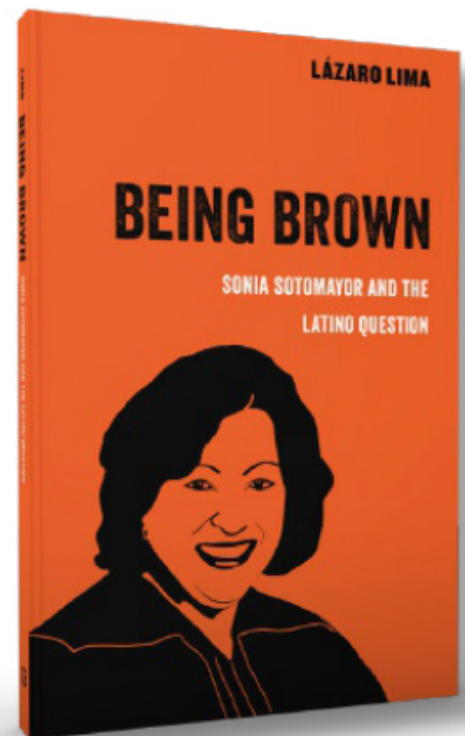
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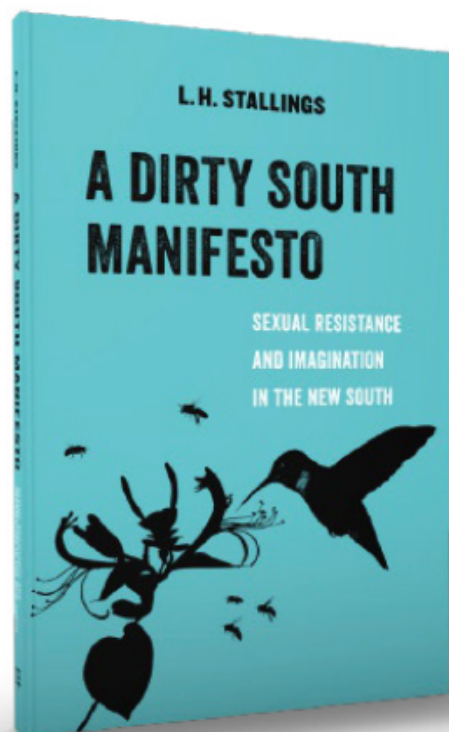
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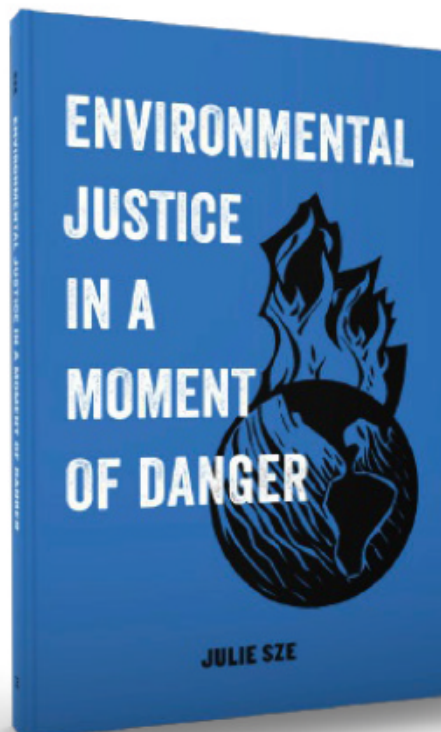
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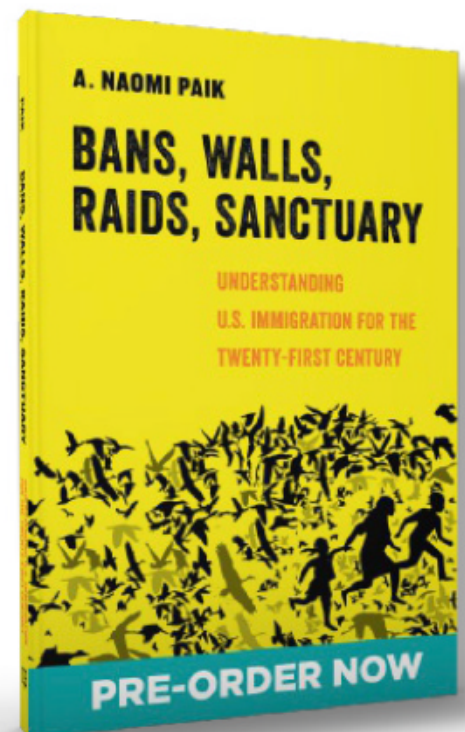
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3 **Against Biden**

4 **Q&A:** Tony Kushner

COLUMNS

5 **Mic Drop**

Taking the Primaries to Court
Elie Mystal

6 **The Liberal Media**

Soliciting Lies
Eric Alterman

8 **Deadline Poet**

The Transformation of William Barr
Calvin Trillin

Features

10 **Fact: Sh*t Happens! (And Will Again)**

Atossa Araxia Abrahamian
We don't have to take capitalism's boom and bust cycles lying down. The next recession offers an unprecedented opportunity to transition to a more green, equitable, and stable economy.

12 **A Green Bailout for the People** Kate Aronoff •

13 **Recessions Are Racist** Aaron Ross Coleman •

14 **Make Antitrust Democratic Again** Sanjukta Paul and Sandeep Vaheesan •

16 **A Recovery for the Whole Family** Sarah Leonard

18 **Walking in Times Square**

Darryl Pinckney
Bringing E.M. Forster's *Howards End* into today's gay Manhattan, *The Inheritance* shows that "Only connect" is still a radical message.

22 **The Delaware Way**

Joseph N. DiStefano
In a small state, the lines between business and politics can be hazy. Which could be a big problem for Joe Biden.

Books & the Arts

27 **Swept Up by History**

Kim Phillips-Fein

31 **Color Blind**

Ismail Muhammad

34 **The Promise of America**

Andrew J. Bacevich

VOLUME 309, NUMBER 13,
NOVEMBER 25, 2019

The digital version of this issue is available to all subscribers November 12 at TheNation.com

Cover photograph: AP / Richard Drew

Against Biden

In recent weeks we at *The Nation*, like many other progressives, have come under increasing pressure to choose between Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren. We're going to resist that pressure to endorse—for now. Not just because we find much to admire in both candidates' programs and in the way both have conducted

their campaigns (especially their rejection of corporate cash and wealthy funders in favor of small donors) but also because we continue to believe the presence of both candidates on the ballot widens the left lane in our politics, exposing the broadest possible public to Medicare for All, the Green New Deal, and measures to rein in corporate power.

We also believe vigorous public debate is the best way for the strongest progressive platform to reach and be embraced by a majority of voters. Progressives may not agree with centrist Democrats like Amy Klobuchar and Pete Buttigieg, but engaging with and answering their criticisms now is essential—not merely to win in 2020 but also to build public pressure on a Congress whose members have proved reluctant to defy their corporate benefactors.

Yet that very debate has been stifled by the continuing candidacy of a man whose chief rationale for running—that he alone can defeat Donald Trump—has become increasingly threadbare. Like Hillary Clinton in 2016, Joe Biden offers the promise of picking up where the Obama administration left off: a restoration of business as usual for the K Street lobbyists and Wall Street speculators whose prosperity the 2008 financial crisis did little to disturb. Indeed, as Joseph N. DiStefano reports in this issue, the man posing as "middle-class Joe" has built his career and his family's wealth on an eagerness to serve not the many Americans crushed by credit card debt but the very banks whose hands are around their throats. The candidate who insists Medicare for All is too expensive for Americans is also the candidate who, like Clinton, endorsed NAFTA, China's admission to the World Trade Organization, and the Trans-Pacific Partnership—all of which have savaged US manufacturing and workers. Clinton's record cost her the industrial heartland (Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan) and, with it, the election.

Biden's long record of poor judgment—on

everything from the 1994 crime bill that fueled mass incarceration to his botched handling of Anita Hill's testimony against Clarence Thomas to his defense of Bill Clinton's brutal welfare cuts to his support for the Iraq War to his role as cheerleader for Wall Street deregulation—renders him an even weaker opponent for a president whose reelection poses a clear and present danger to America's survival as a constitutional republic.

Stumbling through the primaries, Biden's zombie campaign crowds out worthier challengers, handing Trump a free pass on the very issues that should be his Achilles' heel.

On issue after issue, Biden's candidacy offers Trump a unique opportunity to muddy what should be a devastatingly clear choice. *The Nation* therefore calls on Biden to put service to country above personal ambition and withdraw from the race.

Also, while the enduring loyalty of Biden's black supporters is to his credit, the very tenacity of that loyalty diminishes race as a factor at a time when white nationalism is a growing threat. His early withdrawal might well boost candidates of color into the currently all-white top tier.

Let us be clear: Joe Biden is not a crook. Unlike Donald Trump, he has not violated the emoluments clause of the Constitution or appointed members of his family to positions of influence and power. The point about "legal graft"—the corrupt trading of favors, from Tammany Hall to the Delaware Way, so ably anatomized by DiStefano—is that it's perfectly legal.

But that doesn't make it right or a winning platform. Biden and his backers need to face the facts. It may still be unclear which Democrat is best positioned to beat Donald Trump, but we know one thing: The answer is not Joe Biden.





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Per day use fee for calls on instant messaging apps proposed by the Lebanese government—which prompted 2 million protesters to march in October

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Subway fare hike, in US currency, that sparked a million protesters to fill the streets of Santiago, Chile, on October 25

25%

Gasoline price increase in Ecuador after the government repealed fuel subsidies, leading thousands of demonstrators to demand the move be reversed, along with other IMF-imposed austerity measures

500

Police officers redeployed to prevent fare evasion in the New York City subway; on November 1, more than 1,000 protesters marched to call for an end to police brutality and for spending taxpayer funds on more beneficial social programs

—Teddy Ostrow

Political Theater

Tony Kushner discusses the revival of *Bright Room*.

Last year Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* enjoyed a rapturous reception when it returned to Broadway after 25 years. This season brings an updated off-Broadway revival of his first play, 1985's *A Bright Room Called Day*. The story is set in 1932 and 1933 in the Berlin apartment of a character actress. Her artsy friends assemble there as they try to decide what they should do as they see Hitler rising to power. Zillah, an American character in the 1980s, periodically interrupts the action and comments on her own situation, suggesting that Ronald Reagan could pave the way for something like fascism. Kushner has rewritten it substantially, revising Zillah and adding another interrupting character, who lives in the present day.

Shortly after Steven Spielberg finished filming a new adaptation of *West Side Story*, for which Kushner wrote the screenplay, I sat down with the playwright to talk about this early and uncannily timely play.

—Alisa Solomon

AS: When *A Bright Room Called Day* had its first major production at the Public Theater in New York, it wasn't universally embraced. Having loved the play, I hadn't remembered that reviews were so negative. Even *The Nation* belittled it.

TK: I stopped reading reviews after the production in London, midway through a review. I thought, "If I read one more sentence of this guy's hatred for what I did, I will never write again," which is probably melodramatic.

AS: The complaint was moralistic, not taking issue with the writing but scolding you—"How dare you compare Reagan to Hitler!" or in the London version, Thatcher to Hitler—not actually what the play does.

TK: It made people nuts. Here and in London. But I didn't feel then—and I certainly don't feel now—that I was entirely off. The Reagan counterrevolution's mantra was that government is the problem. And hatred of government leads to hatred of democracy. If that goes on long enough and isn't checked by people who believe in democracy and government, it's going to lead to an attempt to replace it with something else—whether you can call it fascism or some other antidemocratic, oligarchic kleptocracy.

AS: In the play, Zillah explicitly rejects the idea that there's a one-to-one correspondence between Reagan and Hitler.

TK: She says if you have a standard of evil like the Holocaust and you make the decision that it is absolutely forbidden to compare anything to that standard, then you're essentially turning what should be the standard for political evil into—as one of the new interruptions in the script says—into reassurance. "Nothing looks like that. So it's not that bad." That [misreading] was infuriating to me.

Still, I felt that what I was trying to do with Zillah wasn't working. I could blame critics for misunderstanding. But I also felt a kind of secret knowledge that she wasn't doing what I needed her to do effectively. And I had absolutely no idea why and absolutely no idea how to fix it.

AS: But now you have rewritten her. What's different?

TK: She's engaging now in a different way, and she's after something. In the 34 years that she has spent trapped in this play, Zillah has begun unpacking many of her contradictions and has an opinion about what the play needs.

AS: And you have added a second interrupting character?

TK: When I started hearing from people, one of them was David Warshofsky, a great actor who had played the Devil in the original production of *Bright Room* and runs the graduate acting program at USC. He said, "I have one extra guy that I need to have a part for." I started trying to figure out whether there was some way to include this actor. Now there are two interrupting characters. One is Zillah with a "Z." The other is Xillah with an "X."

AS: I heard that this Xillah with an "X" is basically you.

TK: In some ways, yes.

AS: So is Xillah the despairing voice of the playwright?

TK: Well, not entirely. He is the author of the play. It is his first play, and he has a vexed relationship with it, and he has returned to see if he can figure it out. He's zeroed in on the thing that he thinks is the problem, which is Zillah. He comes from 2019, which has in many ways compelled him to this return.

AS: Why did you put Zillah into the play in the first place?

TK: I had always had, from Day One, certain doubts about playwriting and theater. Does a seriously committed political person have a right to write make-believe stuff?

Zillah is a manifestation of that. I felt—as we all did in the '80s, partly because of the [AIDS] epidemic and Reaganism—that what Reagan had done was to capture the energy of revolution at a point when the counterculture had basically lost it. The energy of "Fuck it. Let's just do it and see what happens." It somehow reappeared on the right. The Reagan counterrevolution kept going and going, and nothing seemed to be able to drive a stake into its heart.

The thing I had freaked out about in the mid-'80s, that a play wasn't the right response, manifested itself as Zillah, and I followed that impulse: mistrust of the form itself.

AS: The filming of *West Side Story* finished just as you went into rehearsals for *Bright Room*. How does it feel to shift genres?

TK: I love working on film, but the theater is where I belong. With film, I feel like a frog that's been put in whitewater rapids and manages to survive, and then some kind person picks the frog up and returns it to a nice pond. The play is being directed by my best friend

(continued on page 8)

"The Reagan counter-revolution's mantra was that government is the problem."

Elie Mystal

Taking the Primaries to Court

Democratic presidential contenders ignore the Supreme Court at their peril.

In May 2016, presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump released a list of 11 judges he would consider for appointment to the Supreme Court if he made it to the White House. Despite his front-runner status at that late stage of the Republican primaries, the list was not an attempt to pivot toward a general election audience by advancing moderate judicial nominees. Instead, the list, mainly cribbed from a Heritage Foundation cheat sheet of hard-core conservative nominees, was intended to shore up Trump's bona fides in conservative circles.

The move largely worked. Some right-wing commentators worried that he wouldn't follow through, but the conservative legal and political establishments were generally satisfied that a President Trump would deliver when it came to pushing the Republican agenda on the Supreme Court.

And so he has. While neither of Trump's two Supreme Court appointees, Neil Gorsuch and alleged attempted rapist Brett Kavanaugh, was on that initial list, Gorsuch is even more conservative and Kavanaugh more of a partisan hack than Republicans could have reasonably hoped for in May 2016. If Trump gets another pick for the court, the conservative takeover will be complete.

Could somebody text the Democrats about this?

You would think the Democrats running for president might at least mention this threat. There is not a program, policy, right, or ideal Democrats allegedly care about that can survive additional conservative justices. They will frustrate climate change proposals and gun reform. They will limit access to health care, especially for women. They will greenlight discrimination against people of color and the LGBTQ community. There is simply no issue you care about that Republicans cannot destroy through the courts.

Yet so far in the 2020 primaries, it doesn't appear that anybody has taken the question of Supreme Court appointments seriously. Joe Biden has suggested he'd be open to renominating Merrick Garland; Pete Buttigieg has had nice things to say about retired justice Anthony Kennedy, a Reagan appointee whose strong record on gay rights cannot overshadow his votes to allow unfettered money in politics, authorize Trump's Muslim ban, and hand the presidency to George W. Bush. Bernie Sanders says he wants to nominate justices like Ruth Bader Ginsburg—which would be cool if she could be cloned, but since she can't, we don't know if he likes RBG's actual jurisprudence or just her reputation. Elizabeth Warren could probably tell us how she's going to reform the petty cash lockbox at the Interior Department's Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, but she has yet to offer any nominations for the third branch of government.

Instead of making the Supreme Court a campaign issue that could rally the base, the Democrats running for president once again seem committed to running away from making the court a galvanizing campaign issue. Perhaps they remain too afraid of the Republican hordes to offer a vision of what a progressive jurisprudence looks like.

It doesn't have to be this way. The Democratic bench of potential judicial nominees is every bit as deep as the one Trump floated

in 2016, with the advantage that the liberal bench isn't as garishly white as a NASCAR infield. One list I particularly like was recently released by Demand Justice, a group cofounded by Hillary Clinton's campaign press secretary Brian Fallon and Barack Obama's Supreme Court vetter Christopher Kang. It's a diverse list of academics, state attorneys general, and progressive district attorneys, including Sherrilyn Ifill, president of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund; Dale Ho, director of the ACLU's voting rights project; and Larry Krasner, Philadelphia's decarceral district attorney. These people should be the stars Democrats put forward as an antidote to what Mitch McConnell has wrought.

And yet this list has been ignored by the Democrats running for president. Republicans are proud of their most politicized judicial picks. Senator Lindsey Graham's Twitter picture features him literally standing by Kavanaugh. But Democrats run from the courts, living in constant fear of the white Midwestern voter who clings to his guns and religion.

This is a profound error. When I asked Fallon why his group thinks it's so important for Democratic candidates to make progressive judicial appointments an issue now, during the primaries, he answered, "Presidential primaries are how the party takes stock of itself and sets its direction for the medium-term future, so we ought not let this once-every-four-years window go to waste." He also pointed out that few of the big ideas being advanced by the candidates are achievable without at least tacit Supreme Court consent, so talking about the policies and not their plans to reshape the courts is disingenuous.

When it comes to judicial nominees, progressives have spent 30 years ceding intellectual and political ground to conservatives. They don't fight for the 14th Amendment, which guarantees due process and equal protection, the way conservatives fight for the Second Amendment's alleged promise of mutually assured destruction. Their billionaires don't try to buy the courts, as conservative billionaires have been trying to do for a generation. And while the GOP tells its supporters to vote against their own economic interests because the party will put forward conservative judges to fight their culture war, the Democratic messaging seems to be "We will totally fight for the rights of women, gays, and minorities. After we win."

But Democratic voters are ready for this fight—now. Remember how they showed up to protest the Kavanaugh nomination? People can be inspired to fight for their rights.

Democrats have tried to avoid angering white working-class voters by ignoring the centrality of the courts. Appeasement hasn't worked. Maybe it's time to try fighting for something instead. ■



When it comes to judicial nominees, progressives have spent 30 years ceding intellectual and political ground to conservatives.

OBITUARY

RIP, Rep. Conyers

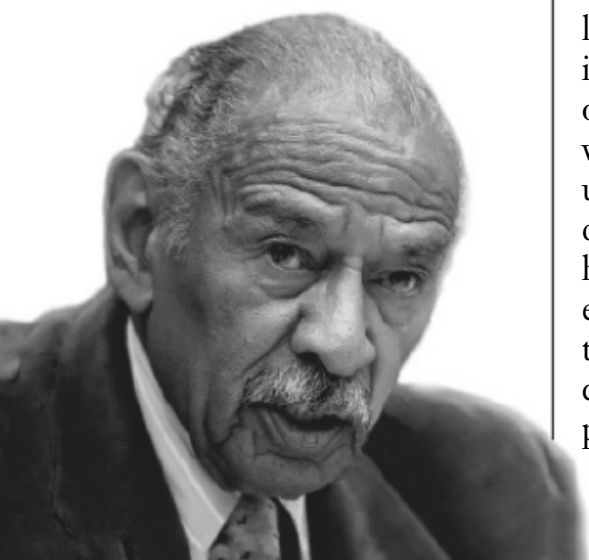
Former representative John Conyers Jr., a Democrat from Michigan and the longest-serving African American in Congress, died on October 27, 2019. He was 90.

Conyers championed social justice causes as an attorney, a civil rights activist, and a congressman. He was one of only seven members of the House to vote against funding the Vietnam War, he cofounded the Congressional Black Caucus, he led a 15-year effort to establish a national holiday for his friend Martin Luther King Jr., and he was an early advocate of Medicare for All.

He also condemned the racist assaults on voting rights in this country. Writing in *The Nation* in 2016, Conyers called out the “disastrous” *Shelby County v. Holder* Supreme Court decision, arguing that it “paved the way for widespread state voter suppression” and opened the door to 1960s-style voter ID laws, purges of voter rolls, and reductions in polling places. It wasn’t enough to be outraged, he said; people needed to “build a voting-rights movement.”

But Conyers’s congressional career ended in 2017 when he resigned amid allegations of sexual harassment and evidence that he used taxpayer money to pay at least one settlement. His hometown paper *The Detroit Free Press* wrote, “It was a scandal that was a swift and crushing fall from grace.”

—Shirley Nwangwa



Eric Alterman



Soliciting Lies

Facebook is profiting from deceitful politicians.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg shares with President Donald Trump the belief that he can blatantly lie about his past and get away with it. Testifying before Congress in October, Zuckerberg intimated that he had founded Facebook to oppose the Iraq War. (Trump, of course, also lies about his alleged opposition to the war.) But Zuckerberg’s actual 2003 creation, FaceMash, was a “hot or not” guide for piggish male Harvard students (like himself). Again, sounding a lot like Trump, he had blogged about women’s photos as he was making FaceMash, “I almost want to put some of these faces next to pictures of some farm animals and have people vote on which is more attractive.”

Another quality Zuckerberg shares with our current president is the impetus to hijack the memory of Martin Luther King Jr. In 2017, Trump called the slain civil rights icon “a man who I’ve studied and watched and admired for my entire life.” With the kind of infinite chutzpah that apparently accompanies a net worth of over \$70 billion, Zuckerberg, in a recent speech at Georgetown University, cited King’s “Letter From Birmingham Jail” to justify Facebook’s decision to let political candidates lie on his site and to continue helping candidates target those lies to those most likely to believe them. “In times of social tension, our impulse is often to pull back from free expression because we want the progress that comes in from free expression but we don’t want this tension,” Zuckerberg said. “We saw this when Martin Luther King Jr. wrote his famous ‘Letter From Birmingham Jail’ when he was unconstitutionally jailed for protesting peacefully.” Zuckerberg also referred to “the effort to shut down campus protests during the Vietnam War” and the imprisonment of Eugene Debs during World War I.

Now, Zuckerberg is probably a smart fellow; he likely understands that a private corporation making millions to pass along incendiary lies on behalf of nefarious politicians is not the same as an individual opposing government censorship of unpopular views. But just in case he didn’t know, King’s daughter Bernice King volunteered to explain it to him, tweeting, “I heard #MarkZuckerberg’s ‘free expression’ speech, in which he referenced my father. I’d like to help Facebook better understand the challenges #MLK faced from disinformation campaigns launched by politicians. These campaigns

created an atmosphere for his assassination.”

During the 2016 election, targeted lies filled every niche of Facebook. And with the help of the company’s sophisticated algorithms, these almost certainly contributed to Trump’s victory. If Zuckerberg somehow remains unconvinced, he might want to look into an outfit called the Internet Research Agency in St. Petersburg, Russia, which targeted African Americans by creating accounts with names like Blacktivist and Woke Blacks to depress turnout for Hillary Clinton. For instance, one of the latter’s messages read, “We cannot resort to the lesser of two devils. Then we’d surely be better off without voting AT ALL.”

Facebook says it is fighting these tactics, but only if undertaken by people not running for office. The Trump campaign has already purchased millions of dollars’ worth of ads, a number of which are devoted to lies about Joe Biden. In testimony before Congress, Zuckerberg told New York Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, “I think lying is bad.” But he still seems happy to juice

Facebook’s stock price by soliciting politicians’ lies.

This is of particular concern to anyone who cares about the viability of democracy anywhere on this planet, because Facebook is one of the most efficient means of spreading news ever devised. In its last quarterly statement, the company reported that it had 2.8 billion regular users across its family of apps—Instagram, WhatsApp, Messenger, and Facebook itself—with over 1.6 billion people showing up on Facebook every day. As a result, profits are sky-high. During the third quarter of 2019, they were up by 19 percent over the previous year, topping \$6 billion.

Zuckerberg has said privately that he considers an Elizabeth Warren presidency an “existential” threat to his company, and he promises to “go to the mat” and fight against it. It’s not hard to conclude that he is interested in keeping Trump in power and his followers happy. He hired former George W. Bush adviser Joel Kaplan to be the company’s vice



Mark Zuckerberg has said privately that he considers an Elizabeth Warren presidency an “existential threat” to his company.

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Bill Miller is an accredited journalist at the UN for the Washington International and has written extensively on UN issues.

He is the Principal of Miller and Associates International Media Consultants, which created the Global Connection Television concept.

Bill developed an interest in international issues and the UN when he served as a US Peace Corps volunteer in the Dominican Republic. In his first year he worked as a community developer in a remote rural area; his second year he was Professor of Social Work at the Madre y Maestra University in Santiago, the country's second largest city.

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president of US public policy in 2011 and chose former Republican senator John Kyl to conduct a review of conservatives' complaints. (While he could not find any significant evidence for their accusations of liberal bias, his report nevertheless repeated their worries that conservatives could be harmed by hate speech policies.)

Politico's Natasha Bertrand and Daniel Lippman recently broke the story that Zuckerberg initiated a series of private dinners at one of his many homes with Trump boosters such as *The Daily Wire's* Ben Shapiro, far-right talk-show host Hugh Hewitt, Fox News' Tucker Carlson, and GOP Senator Lindsey Graham. The authors quoted a source who found the reaction to his entreaties "more positive than I anticipated" and judged Zuckerberg to be "receptive and thoughtful." Another said, "I've always thought that he wanted to make things right by conservatives."

We should hardly be surprised by Facebook's decision to invite Trump and company to lie. It's both profitable and good politics, from Zuckerberg's standpoint. Warren does have a plan to break up the company (and companies like it), and Facebook's salvation requires either a Trump reelection or a Republican-controlled Senate. We should not be shocked by the company's decision to include the journalistically indefensible *Breitbart News* in its new "trusted sources" news section or by its willingness to allow the scurrilous *Daily Wire* to violate the company's rules with what Judd Legum's *Popular Information* newsletter has identified as exactly the kind of "inauthentic coordinated behavior" Facebook forbids. What should surprise us, however, is our unwillingness to recognize just how destructive a force Facebook has become and ask ourselves, "How will we save our country and democracy itself from its ravages?" ■

COMIX NATION

PETER KUPER



Calvin Trillin Deadline Poet

THE TRANSFORMATION OF WILLIAM BARR

His past, they said, was proof that he
Would be a pretty straight AG.
But, going down a different road, he
Became Trump's most corrupted toady.
The words that he forgot are these:
Lie down with dogs, get up with fleas.

(continued from page 4)

[Oskar Eustis, the artistic director of the Public Theater]. It's the first time we've worked together in a long time as playwright and director. That's a blast.

AS: Are we at a place now where there's more acceptance of or even hunger for serious political art? When *Bright Room* premiered, we were still suffering from a McCarthy hangover that insisted on keeping art and politics separated.

TK: That separation still exists. I wrote *Bright Room* in part because of Primo Levi's point that the moral drama about choices that can affect an outcome are not appropriate for the concentration camp. Once you're there, the fundamental horror is that you have lost agency. When choices can be made is before the railroad tracks are laid and the boxcars start to roll. That's why I set this play in 1932 and 1933, because that's the moment when it could have gone—and

it was starting to go—in another direction. By July of '32, the KPD [Communist Party of Germany] was gaining.

AS: But those on the left were attacking one another, which you're clear about in the play.

TK: That's part of the horror of it. ■

Alisa Solomon, the director of the arts and culture concentration at the Columbia School of Journalism, is the author of Wonder of Wonders: A Cultural History of "Fiddler on the Roof."

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RACE

ANTITRUST

FACT:
SH*T HAPPENS!

(AND WILL AGAIN)

BEYOND BAILOUTS:
ECONOMIC RECOVERIES FOR
RACIAL JUSTICE, GENDER EQUALITY,
A GREEN TRANSITION, AND
REVIVING ANTITRUST.

GENDER



CLIMATE

The Nation.



ATOSSA ARAXIA ABRAHAMIAN

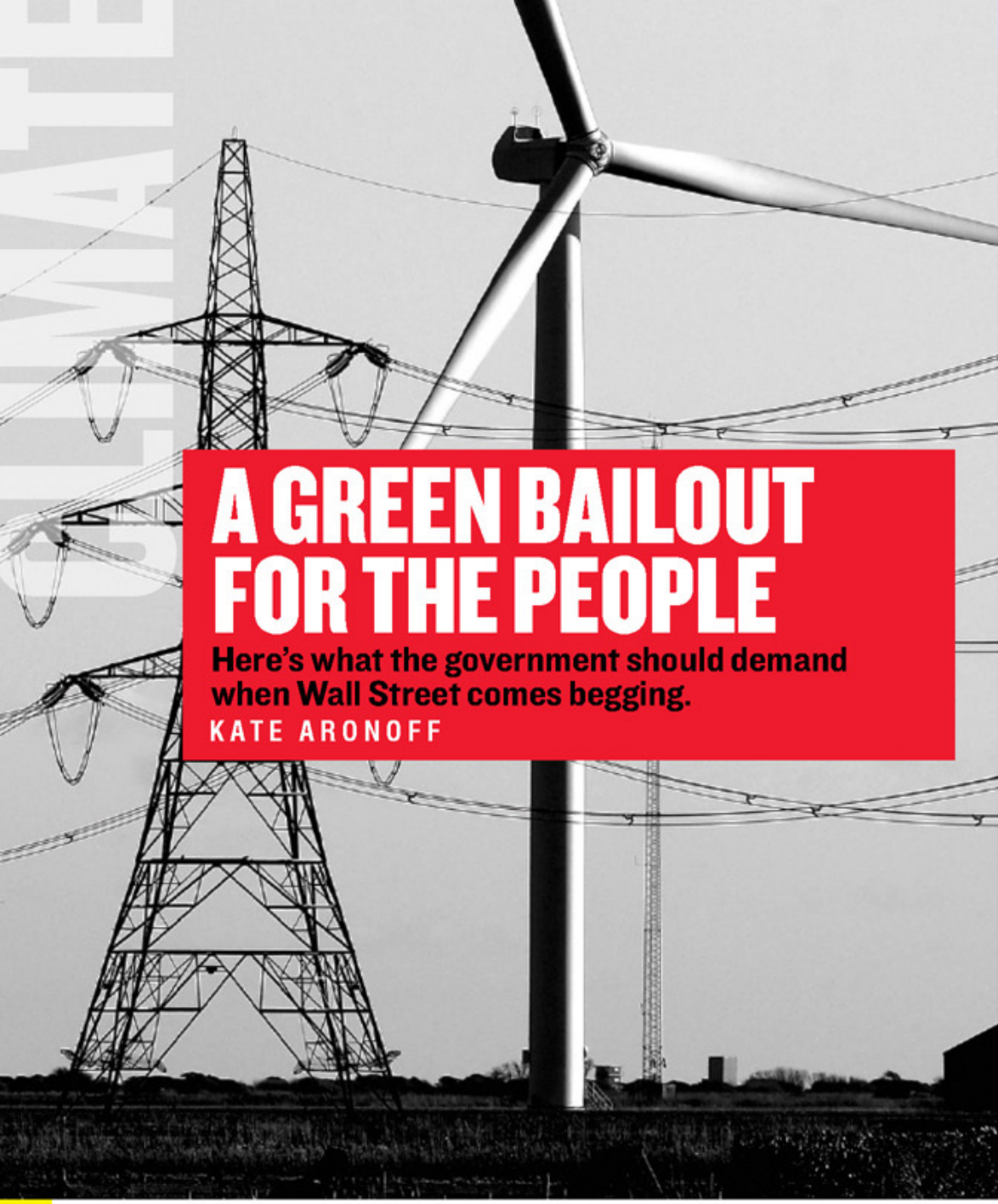
SINCE THE FALL OF 2008, AMERICANS HAVE WATCHED THE financial markets with the hypervigilant anxiety of a rescue pet: spoiled by (relative) prosperity and half expecting to be cast back out at a moment's notice. This feeling of nervous anticipation peaked over the summer, when a key economic indicator known as the yield curve fell out of whack and investors briefly stood to make more money lending to the government in the short term rather than the long term.

Historically, an inverted yield curve has meant a recession is coming—a bad outcome for almost everyone involved, especially the poor. Yet this curve brought with it a sort of dark vindication. With slowing global growth and a trade war with China, things couldn't possibly be as good as they seemed, could they? For the moment, however, the markets seem to have bounced back. In early November the Dow Jones, NASDAQ, and S&P 500 indexes closed at record highs; at last count, US unemployment hit a 50-year low of 3.5 percent; and homeownership was on the rise, at almost 65 percent. At the same time, *Bloomberg News* put the risk of a recession (defined as two consecutive quarters of negative economic growth) in the next 12 months at 27 percent, while other experts expect the coming slump to be less pronounced—more of a correction than a cataclysm.

It's impossible to tell who's right. All we know is that a downturn is a "when," not "if," scenario. Whoever is in power when that day finally comes will have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to seize the moment and transform the US economy. A second Trump term would derail any efforts toward a green, equitable, and fair 21st century. Corporate power will continue to swell; more plant and animal species will die off; people will suffer hotter summers, colder winters, longer hours, worse benefits, less pay; and minorities will feel their pain compounded by the weight of marginalization. But 2020 is far from a done deal, and activists, lawmakers, politicians, and voters who want to live to see a better world (or, let's face it, just live) should prepare a fleet of ambitious policies to deploy in a historic fight for fairness, justice, and equality.

The stakes could not be higher. There's a narrative about the last crash that begins with the first subprime mortgage and continues through the bank bailout, the Occupy Wall Street protests, and the Tea Party's rise, then culminates with strong Republican gains in the 2010 midterms, laying the ground for the election of Donald J. Trump. That brings us to where we are today, with a veneer of economic prosperity but few guarantees for working people in the future.

For conservatives, this narrative mirrors the arc of justice: The market won. But for progressives, the road is paved with missed opportunities. Where would we be if decarbonization had been a precondition for the auto industry bailouts or if the banks' welfare checks had come stapled to tax reforms that redistributed wealth downward? What might have happened to gender equality or how we measure real unemployment and underemployment if the Obama administration had thought to compensate the labor that takes place in the home as well as in the office and on the factory floor? Would people of color have lost fewer jobs, homes, and livelihoods if economic recovery programs had been designed to address rampant hiring discrimination? Was the previous crisis really the last, best chance to set a more democratic precedent for antitrust legislation and prevent the monopolistic, Uberized mess we're in today? As we continue to obsess over stock prices and prognosticate the end of days (no one wants to be the sucker who didn't call it), it's crucial to plan how not to squander the next crisis. We hope these contributions from some of our experts on their various beats will show Democrats—and perhaps an enlightened Republican or two—that there are many alternatives.



A GREEN BAILOUT FOR THE PEOPLE

Here's what the government should demand
when Wall Street comes begging.

KATE ARONOFF

THE US GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE 2008 financial crash was this century's greatest missed opportunity. On the one hand, \$700 billion in bailout money went to prop up banks, insurers, and automakers through the Troubled Asset Relief Program, or TARP. On the other, the Obama administration's stimulus program—formally, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act—spent an estimated \$831 billion to create jobs, spur buying, and in the process deliver the closest thing that we've seen thus far to a Green New Deal.

Among other things, the Recovery Act enabled tens of billions of dollars' worth of investment in climate-related infrastructure as well as loan guarantees and cash grants to clean-energy companies. It was a turning point in making wind and solar cost-competitive. The stimulus program invested \$90 billion in these technologies, and renewable power generation doubled over the course of Barack Obama's first term.

Despite these successes, the investment was far too small. True, the administration conceded some ground to the idea that governments should spend their way out of a recession, thereby avoiding the full-blown austerity trap that continues to plague Europe. But by 2010, Obama returned to an attempt to cut the federal deficit, keeping the greatest accomplishments of the stimulus quiet.

What's more, the banks helped to undermine whatever progress the Recovery Act might have made in curbing emissions through its proto-Green New Deal. Since 2016, JPMorgan Chase—which received \$25 billion in

Bailout recipients should be subject to a strict carbon audit that examines the lifetime emissions of projects they finance.

Kate Aronoff is a writer covering climate and American politics.

TARP funds—has poured \$196 billion into coal, oil, and gas projects around the world. Wells Fargo was given the same amount and has invested in new fossil fuel infrastructure to the tune of \$152 billion, and together, major banks financed \$1.9 trillion worth of fossil fuel investment over the same period. Combined with relatively high oil prices and cheap postcrash credit, the bailout's infusion of cash into the financial system helped spur the natural gas boom.

Bailouts tend to get presented as a binary. Either let flailing firms fail or save them to prevent economic disruption. That's a false choice. "The key thing to remember," economist J.W. Mason says, "is that bailouts are not just handouts.... They are also moments when the government has maximum leverage over the private sector. If we are going to be paying the piper in the next crisis, we should be thinking now about what tunes we want to call." In this view, the Obama administration's response to the 2008 financial crisis offers a cautionary lesson: It was too heavy on carrots and too light on sticks.

The next crash will be a once-in-a-lifetime chance to decarbonize the economy, so the next recovery cannot aim to just blindly increase output and demand. An industrial mobilization on the scale of a Green New Deal could cause a short-term spike in emissions, but it will need to transform consumption qualitatively by giving more people access to real prosperity, not just the ability to buy more cheap junk. Sociologist Daniel Aldana Cohen has aptly called for a "last stimulus" that would dramatically shrink those parts of the economy we don't need (fossil fuels, speculative finance, building more McMansions) while increasing those we do (renewable energy, public transit, care work, affordable housing, education, the arts, and more).

We can't know for certain what sectors will falter when the next crash hits. But as in the past, Wall Street will likely come begging. Should that happen, the next administration could finally bring it under democratic control and in line with the planet's limits. Any bank that wants a check from the federal government, for example, should have to stop financing the companies wrecking the earth. Bailout recipients should be subject to a strict carbon audit that examines the lifetime emissions of projects they finance.

Another good starting point might be a blacklist for investments in the 20 fossil fuel producers that researchers have found are responsible for one-third of all carbon emissions since 1965. While that number includes private and state-owned firms, such a list could keep major banks from assisting with deals like the IPO for Aramco, Saudi Arabia's state-owned oil company and a notorious polluter. Similar standards should be applied to insurance companies. As of 2018, the 10 largest insurers in the United States were holding just over \$50 billion in fossil fuel investments. Just two of those disclosed that they considered climate change when making investment strategies.

The auto bailout was another wasted opportunity. When the federal government took out multibillion-dollar stakes in Chrysler and General Motors in 2008, it imposed some terms: requiring mergers and consolidations within the companies, firing GM chief executive Rick Wagoner, and setting new auto efficiency standards. But the administration largely squandered its leverage. As Obama proudly proclaimed, "The federal government

will refrain from exercising its rights as a shareholder in all but the most fundamental corporate decisions.”

With the transportation sector accounting for 29 percent of US emissions, the auto industry now demands a more fundamental reorientation that would move the country away from car-centric planning and into robust networks of affordable public transit. If car companies want in on the action next time, they should be compelled to play by the rules of a Green New Deal. Labor would benefit significantly from this. The United Auto Workers—which called its first strike in 12 years this September—has borne the brunt of the industry’s ups and downs. At a minimum, any suite of climate policies (whether passed in response to a recession or not) should include trillions of dollars’ worth of investment in no-carbon trains and buses and aim to phase out the production of combustion-powered vehicles that use fossil fuels by around 2025. It could ensure that workers who were laid off before the legislation went into effect are rehired and receive wages comparable to or better than those they received before.

New procurement standards mandating zero-carbon fleets could see unionized workers building tens of thousands of electric vehicles for agencies like the US Postal Service. That massive purchasing power could help create and enforce labor and environmental standards up and

down the supply chain—for example, in the mining of minerals like lithium and cobalt, which are currently extracted under inhumane working conditions.

Though going electric might, by industry estimates, eventually require 30 percent fewer workers, the transition would involve heavy investment and a correspondingly high labor demand. In the long run, job losses could be amply offset by cutting the workweek to four days while maintaining higher wages.

Of course, none of these changes could happen in a vacuum. The context for any such arrangement should be building an economy that extracts far less from the earth. While this all sounds wildly ambitious, it is not without precedent. During the domestic mobilization of World War II, US manufacturing was partly nationalized to supply the needs of the Allied forces, and the National Guard seized plants whose owners failed to comply. GM stopped making cars entirely. The US essentially ran on a centrally planned economy.

Wars and recessions are often a prerequisite for renegotiating the relationships between the state and the economy. With this in mind, the government should take full advantage of the next crash to address the greatest existential threat that humanity has ever known and to do it with everything we’ve got. ■

“If we are going to be paying the piper in the next crisis, we should be thinking now about what tunes we want to call.”

—J.W. Mason,
economist,
John Jay College



ANTHONY HAMILTON’S VOICE SOUNDS THE way a recession feels: full of struggle and loss. In 2008, as the US economy came crashing down, the North Carolina crooner deployed his tenor in the ballad “Cool.” He wanted folks to hear that it didn’t take much money to have a good time. He sang that when all else withers, “we can fill up on love alone.” It was a beautiful song, but it was no match for Wells Fargo’s “ghetto loans.”

As the country fell deep into recession, black communities plummeted even further, into what Princeton scholar Eddie Glaude Jr. terms the Great Black Depression. Targeted by predatory mortgages for “mud people,” as Wells Fargo officials called them, then left behind by a color-blind stimulus package, black folks felt the financial

crisis acutely. White unemployment hit a high of 9 percent to black unemployment’s 17. While 4.5 percent of white recent borrowers lost their homes, 8 percent of black recent borrowers lost theirs. The fall was tremendous, with black America losing half its wealth.

Ten years later, it has yet to rebound, and as global growth slows, as Donald Trump’s tariffs bite and the recession warning signals blare, America must proactively attack racialized inequality, or else racialized inequality will once again ravage America.

“‘Recession’ is a very scary word for black people in this country,” says labor economist and City University of New York professor Michelle Holder. In her book *African American Men and the Labor Market During the Great Recession*, she asserts that as unemployment rose in

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the last recession, the severity of workplace discrimination did, too. The swelling supply of labor activated employers' bigoted preferences like an enzyme. In 2010, 18.4 percent of black men were unemployed—a higher proportion than for any other racial or ethnic group. “It’s the old adage that if white America gets a cold, black folks get the flu,” she says. “All economic indicators support that.”

Black women, too, feel exacting pain during downturns. They often work in sectors more sensitive to economic fluctuations, and since many are the breadwinners in single-parent households, when they lose their jobs, their whole family is imperiled. “As a female black economist, when I hear the term ‘recession,’ my thoughts automatically go to the black community, which will be hit harder than the white community,” Holder says. “That’s just going to happen. So we need to prepare.”

One way to soften the blow is for Congress to pass legislation that would prevent employers from rejecting job seekers because of their credit score or criminal record. Pointing to a report by the Federal Reserve Board that analyzed segregation and low credit scores, Holder argues that “using credit information as an employment screening tool likely has a disparate impact on minorities.” The federal government could prevent employers from replicating existing racial disparities by passing a national version of New York’s Stop Credit Discrimination in Employment Act.

Similar disparities plague America’s carceral state. Passing legislation to ban the box (the place on job forms to report criminal convictions), such as the Fair Chance to Compete for Jobs Act, would also decrease discrimination against black job seekers. Policies tackling recidivism and unemployment discrimination and promoting workforce training would address racial inequality as well. But the best way to eliminate the discrimination endemic to recessions is by creating a federal jobs guarantee. Through programs like a National Investment Employment Corps, everyone willing and able to work would be given a job, thus eliminating racialized employment disparities.

Short of sweeping reforms, the need to fortify the country’s social safety net is crucial. AFL-CIO chief economist William Spriggs says implementing a financial transaction tax, stabilizing state and local government investment, and federalizing the country’s unemployment insurance program could temper how the next recession affects all Americans and communities of color in particular.

During downturns, state and local governments slash spending to balance their budgets. That austerity winds up gutting local schools and municipal safety and sewage systems. It contributes to local disasters like the water crisis in Flint, Michigan, and the bankruptcy of Stockton, California. It deprives vulnerable citizens of public services when they need them most. Creating a tax on financial transactions could fund a revenue insurance program at the state and local levels. This fund would subsidize government spending and help keep vital public services affordable, safe, and available during a recession.

Additionally, nationalizing the states’ disparate unemployment insurance programs would allow the federal government to provide people who are out of work with consistent benefits until the economy fully recovers.

Beyond policy, Spriggs stresses that the main impedi-

ment to effective policies is ideological. The last recession was so massive that Republicans had no choice but to support a stimulus. But in milder recessions, recovery can be top-heavy: Wealthy banks, firms, and individuals can bounce back quickly, creating an appearance of economic health that leaves out working-class families. “As the economy becomes more unequal, the political stonewalling that the Republicans are likely to put in place will exacerbate,” he says. “If you look at the share of the economy the bottom 20 percent get, it’s tiny, so [their] suffering doesn’t measure in the macroeconomic picture.”

Just as the big banks were too big to fail in the last recession, black families might be too small to save in the next one. “This political melee is dangerous,” Spriggs warns. “If this downturn is mild, it is going to hit people at the bottom.” Thus the stakes for black families are enormous. They bore the brunt of the last recession and missed out on much of the subsequent recovery. Three years ago, then-candidate Trump asked black voters, “What the hell do you have to lose?” If a downturn hits, the answer could be “Everything.” ■



Sanjukta Paul is an assistant professor of law at Wayne State University. Sandeep Vaheesan is the legal director at the Open Markets Institute.

CORPORATE MONOPOLIES AND OLIGOPOLIES heighten the risk of a recession—and they certainly don’t help matters once a downturn is underway. They create a vicious cycle, transferring wealth upward and moving the disposable income and wages of the many into the investment accounts of the few. Wave after wave of consolidation has shuttered plants, stores, warehouses, and transportation hubs around the country. Together with fiscal austerity and low union density, concentrated corporate power weakens Americans’ purchasing power, decreasing the demand for goods and services. Weak consumption by households, in turn, impedes full employment and increases the likelihood of recessions.

That's why, if reform can't happen sooner, we ought to seize on the next recession as a moment of crisis in which to remake antitrust law and restore its historical purpose: to redistribute economic resources and power to the people. A more equitable distribution of income and clout would make our economy more stable and less susceptible to sudden downturns, as well as empower all citizens.

US law regulating monopolies was intended to put a check on the likes of John D. Rockefeller and J.P. Morgan, who monopolized industries like oil refining and steelmaking. Now, though, its aim of preserving competition helps large companies while hurting small businesses, workers, and consumers by allowing corporate behemoths to merge and preventing groups of independent workers and small firms from building power through collective action.

To understand the upside-down nature of the law, consider the gig economy. This sector has become a significant source of employment (albeit precarious and badly paid) since 2008. And as far as antitrust law is concerned, large corporations like Uber and Lyft have enjoyed the freedom to set prices for hundreds of thousands of putatively independent drivers. Meanwhile, the gig workers do not have the right under existing antitrust law to organize to raise their wages and demand better terms of work. When Uber engages in price coordination, it's legal. When gig workers do, they're considered to be acting collusively.

Not only is this a legal paradox; it is also the making of economic disaster. When the next recession hits, Uber will be tempted to slash its drivers' incomes further, and drivers will have no remedy through collective action. Moreover, this Uber antitrust paradox is playing out across the economy more broadly. Currently, antitrust law's official purpose is to promote competition, yet it uncritically allows and even blesses the economic coordination that takes place within big firms. Demanding that antitrust law promote only competition is not a tenable solution. Competition is not categorically good. Indeed, we take many of the current limits on competition for granted, from patents and property rights more generally to business corporations themselves, all of which antitrust law recognizes as legitimate. The fact is that both pernicious and socially desirable forms of competition and cooperation exist. A cartel of large pharmaceutical corporations fixing the prices of lifesaving medicines has consequences radically different from a group of workers or small firms confronting a powerful purchaser. Yet antitrust law today treats these two cases as legally indistinguishable.

This bias against cooperation among smaller players comes up in the context of small business, too. Small entrepreneurs, such as fast-food franchisees and independent professionals, aren't allowed to cooperate to better their bargaining positions: They have to either accept domination by powerful corporations or join them (think of the physicians who have become employees of large hospital chains). Similarly, consumers likely don't have the right to engage in collective action to obtain better terms and service from powerful companies. The Supreme Court has implied that consumer boycotts for purely economic (as opposed to political) ends, such as obtaining lower prices on unaffordable bread, could be challenged using antitrust and other laws regulating business conduct.

When Uber engages in price coordination, it's legal. When workers do, they're considered to be acting collusively.

Why don't nontraditional workers and other individuals build power by incorporating? The answer is complicated. The Supreme Court has made clear that establishing a corporation is insufficient to escape the antitrust ban on collusion. In his final antitrust opinion, delivered in 2010, Justice John Paul Stevens wrote on behalf of a unanimous court that a corporation is illegal "when the entity [is] controlled by a group of competitors and serve[s], in essence, as a vehicle for ongoing concerted activity." In other words, independent competitors cannot legalize their collusive conduct under antitrust law by forming a corporation.

This means that to escape the price-fixing hammer, Uber drivers would have to centralize ownership and control rights over their labor in a single corporate entity, which is likely neither feasible nor attractive. For consumers, meeting this test is even harder.

It's within our reach to make antitrust law a friend rather than a foe of progressive movements. Despite its current bias toward big business, these laws have always had a democratizing strain. That's what inspired the Sherman Act of 1890 and the progressive- and New Deal-era exemptions for employees and farmers. Antitrust law today is in need of a ground-up reconstruction that recaptures its original aims.

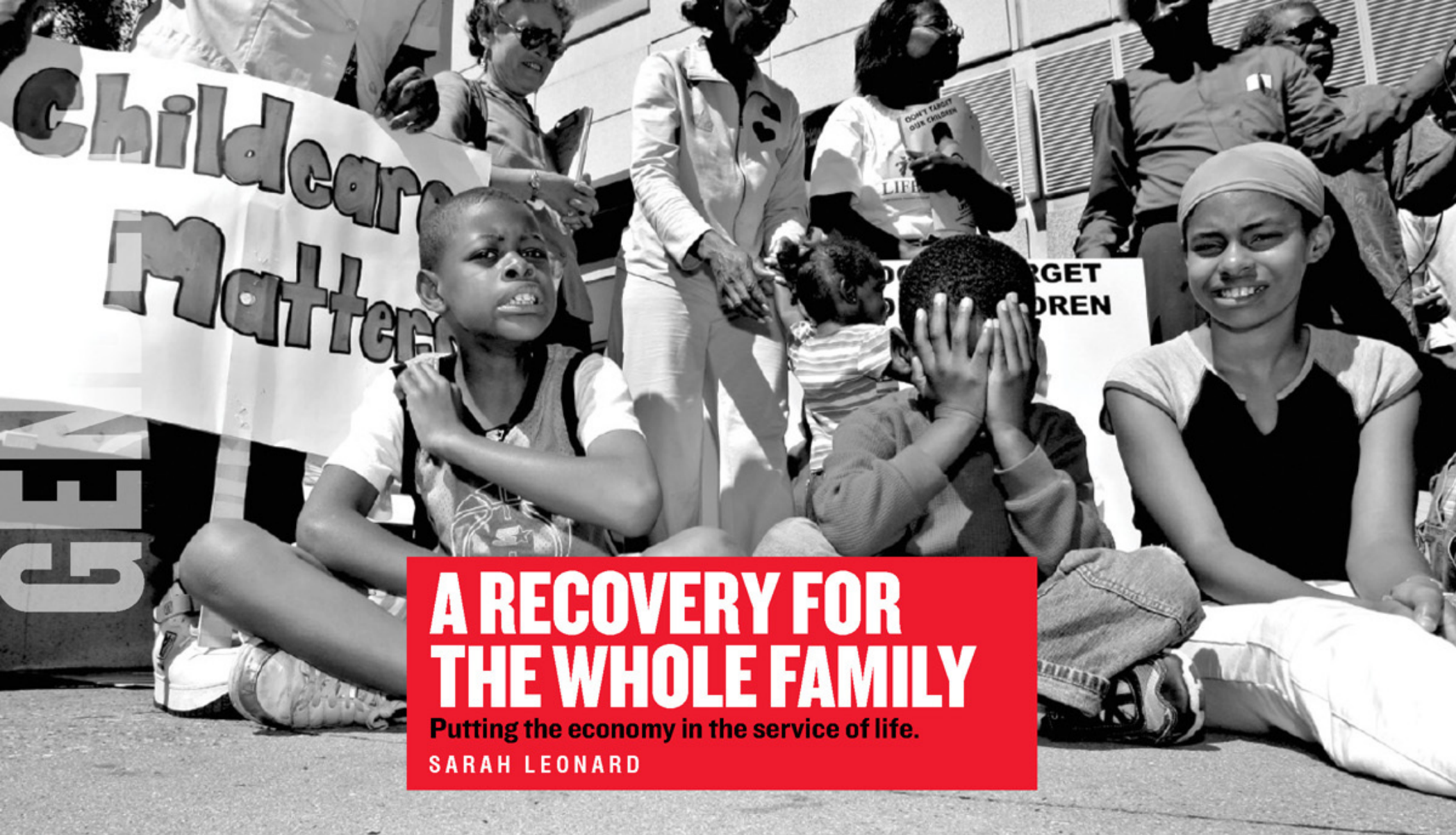
A democratic antitrust policy must include curbing corporate power through direct public controls on mergers and predatory practices. It should progressively allocate economic coordination rights, both by restricting the ability of large corporations to control and dominate other market participants and by allowing workers and small firms to organize or counterorganize. It should seek to balance power in society rather than exacerbate existing imbalances.

Think of the possibilities for cooperation among consumers and smaller players if they were freed from the threat of antitrust. Gig workers, freelancers, and small producers who often experience precarity and poverty could bargain collectively for better contracts, much as if they belonged to a union.

In the longer term, this collective action could support the creation of alternatives to existing investor-driven firms. Uber drivers or writers on Fiverr could build on collective bargaining and form their own cooperatively owned and operated platforms. These cooperatives would answer to the members—the providers of labor, skills, and ingenuity—rather than to venture capitalists and investment banks.

Similarly, allowing cooperation among consumers, whether they're buying groceries or cable TV subscriptions, could lay the groundwork for democratizing utilities. For example, residents of a county or municipality could build collective power to strike a better deal with a poorly regulated, investor-owned utility and use this as the foundation for building a distributed-energy co-op.

Rebuilding antitrust law is an essential element of the progressive economic policy agenda. Antitrust should be part of a suite of reforms in the Green New Deal—something that we sorely need, no matter when or how hard the next recession hits. ■



A RECOVERY FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Putting the economy in the service of life.

SARAH LEONARD

AS LONG AS WE'VE HAD CAPITALISM, WE'VE HAD financial crises. Today, mainstream economists acknowledge that the next crisis will be resolved not by monetary policy but through serious spending by the government. To ensure that the spending is committed to wealth redistribution and helps the left build new constituencies, progressives should consider a feminist analysis: namely, compensating the reproductive labor that remains largely invisible and woefully underappreciated in this country.

This labor includes all the work that holds families and communities together, from child-rearing and elder care to community politics. Theorist Nancy Fraser describes it as the “social glue” that allows for social cooperation; without it, there would be “no economy, no polity, no culture,” she writes. But over the last few decades, the people who do this work—mostly women—have absorbed shock after capitalist shock. Care that used to be social and supported by state investment has been thrown back on individuals and the family as a private concern.

Consider that federal public investment today stands at its lowest level since 1947. Advocates for social services have been losing ground for decades. A comprehensive child care bill with bipartisan congressional support was killed back in 1971, after a young Pat Buchanan persuaded Richard Nixon that a veto could be used to rally cultural conservatives. Ronald Reagan fought to reduce spending on social services so successfully that “in real terms,” according to John Miller in *Dollars & Sense*, programs for low-income Americans “suffered a withering 54 percent cut in federal spending from 1981 to 1988,” including things like housing subsidies and employment services. Reagan justified these reductions as an answer to the crisis of stagflation.

The 1990s saw continued cuts under Bill Clinton,

“I think expanding access to child care... is one of the best economic policies you can put in place.”

—Kate Bahn, economist, Washington Center for Equitable Growth

Sarah Leonard is a contributing editor at *The Nation* and *The Appeal* and an editor at large at *Dissent*.

who declared the “end of welfare as we know it” and required that most women seeking benefits work. (The work of raising children didn’t count.) His brand of austerity was meant to court so-called moderates who cared about the federal deficit. Today, as a result, everything from welfare to health care to child care has languished. What the state no longer provides, individuals and families must—and those providers tend to be women.

At the same time, real wages have fallen since the 1970s, burdening workers even more. The family wage is no longer even an aspirational norm; these days, everybody has to work, and too many struggle to get by without even a living wage. Fraser and others have called the resulting crush a “crisis of care,” in which the very fabric of society is shredded and women are tasked with just barely holding it together under enormous pressure—including the demands of work. An unexpected event like an illness or unplanned pregnancy can become catastrophic, and all of life is permeated with the need to compete and make no mistakes, lest one fall into poverty and debt. Everything that business doesn’t want to pay for through higher taxes, better wages, or employee benefits has been foisted onto families, which, in turn, must keep their members healthy enough to work.

The next financial crisis will present an opportunity for the left to put the economy back in the service of life. This means that in our response to the crisis, we must not fall into the trap of placing “productive” waged work over unpaid reproductive work. Full employment and a Green New Deal are important, but it would be a grave mistake not to put care work at the center of our political project.

What would this look like in practice? For one, it would require taking basic forms of care off the market and making them a shared public responsibility instead. Medicare for All is already a core demand of the left; we must add to

it universal, free child care. Not only is this an issue that affects millions of families, but the expense has also made good care an often unreachable luxury. According to the Washington Center for Equitable Growth, the average cost of licensed infant child care is \$1,230 per month, which is almost a fifth of the US median family monthly income. In over 50 percent of states, one year of care for infants outside the home costs more than the average yearly cost of public college tuition. In the past decade, the cost of child care has increased by nearly 25 percent, while real wages have roughly stayed the same.

In an interview with *Refinery29*, political science professor Marissa Martino Golden notes that after welfare policy changes in the 1990s, many low-income women tried to enter the workforce but found they had few options when it came to taking care of their kids. “That forced them to use either lower-quality care providers or child care that was not reliable. If child care was not available one day, [these women] would likely be fired from their jobs,” she says. Things aren’t any better today: According to a new study by the center, parents in the retail and food service sector (which accounts for 17 percent of jobs in the US economy) are often required to work variable shifts and so must depend on “more numerous care arrangements,” including a “reliance on informal care,” such as “children [being asked] to provide care for themselves and for their siblings.”

“I think expanding access to child care...is one of the best economic policies you can put in place,” says Kate Bahn, an economist at the center. This offers workers

The family wage is no longer even an aspirational norm; these days, everybody has to work, and too many struggle to get by without even a living wage.

greater security, and “when we treat these workers well, it also affects the quality of child care, which improves outcomes for the children receiving that care—a long-term positive effect.”

Bahn adds that universal child care would stimulate demand in the event of a recession. “If we believe that having a child care program will benefit both child care workers and those who currently pay for the care, the program is really targeting those [who] have a higher marginal propensity to consume. In other words, they will spend the money that they now have because of this universal program,” she says.

There is a large constituency for such a policy: all of the families affected by the care crisis (fewer than one in three children in the United States have a full-time, stay-at-home parent today) and people (mostly women) working in the sector. What’s more, there are about 2 million domestic workers in the United States, the majority of them immigrant women and women of color, and 1.2 million child care workers. Properly organized child care would also create unionized jobs in a category that is notorious for its exploitation of immigrant women, who are in a weak position to fight for higher wages.

At our next moment of crisis, we should demand free universal child care, a policy that would not only provide a powerful boost to the economy but also transform the way Americans view care work and labor. Eventually, care would come to be seen as a necessary task for society to invest in, not a private responsibility hidden from political life. ■

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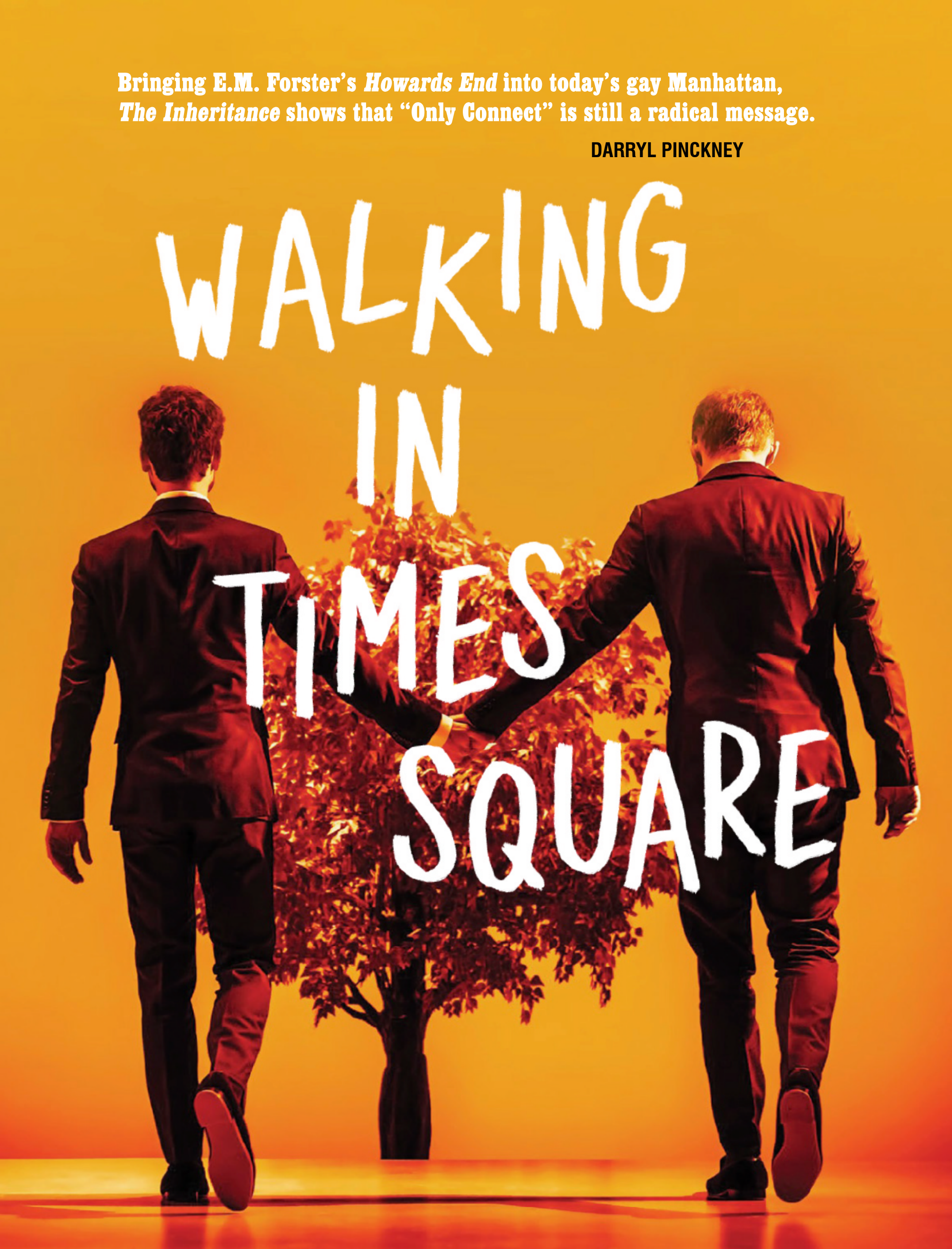
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Bringing E.M. Forster's *Howards End* into today's gay Manhattan,
The Inheritance shows that "Only Connect" is still a radical message.

DARRYL PINCKNEY

WALKING IN TIMES SQUARE

The image features two men in dark suits walking away from the viewer towards a large tree with autumn-colored leaves. The scene is set against a bright orange background, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The men are walking on a reflective surface, and their shadows are cast on the ground. The title "WALKING IN TIMES SQUARE" is overlaid in large, white, hand-drawn style letters.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, LYTTON STRACHEY TOLD E.M. FORSTER THAT because he, Forster, was celibate, he didn't know what he was talking about in *Maurice*, his novel of gay love triumphant. Strachey told him that the relationship he depicts between Maurice and Alec was unreal: That kind of love between men never lasted. But Strachey knew Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon, artists living together when Forster finished his novel in 1914, and the characters of Maurice and Alec were modeled on the poet Edward Carpenter and his working-class partner, George Merrill, who, like Ricketts and Shannon, would live together for decades, until death. Such devotion is rare enough.

In *A Great Unrecorded History: A New Life of E.M. Forster*, Wendy Moffat tells us that Forster disapproved of the flamboyant carnation style of Wilde and Strachey. He had two—nonwhite—great loves before the Jazz Age. In 1930, Forster found love again, with Bob Buckingham, a policeman, and it came at the cost of having to be a witness at Buckingham's wedding. Forster lived out his triangle and remembered Buckingham's grandchildren in his will. Christopher Isherwood declared himself ready to be Forster's disciple when they met in 1932. Forster showed Isherwood the manuscript of *Maurice*, and Isherwood was embarrassed for him, for his Hellenic attitudes and fig leaf vocabulary. Forster died in 1970 at the age of 91, at the dawn of gay liberation. He had put away his one gay novel, among a lot of other unpublished work, but *Maurice* appeared in print almost as soon as he died, with revisions suggested by his friends down through the years.

Bloomsbury was the rage of English departments when I was an undergraduate in the early '70s. It was British, gay, and upper class, everything a black American queer could want. I was reading Quentin Bell. The birds were speaking Greek. I worshipped Virginia Woolf, foolishly sent her into battle against James Joyce, failed to get Strachey's humor, and didn't understand J.M. Keynes, really, or G.E. Moore at all. I had a professor who talked about Bloomsbury and androgyny, and that professor lost me immediately. I liked my Bloomsbury butch-bewildered, with female sacrifices, like a senior seminar before Columbia went co-ed. I found symbols, myth, masculine-feminine conflict, and a theory of latent class war inside the pleasures of *Howards End*. I am touched to remember how much Forster loved *The Waves*. He and Woolf never seemed like contemporaries. Detecting in Forster's handshake a shyness with smart women, Woolf ordered him to go read Defoe. Yet she found Forster the best of critics because he was willing to say the simple things clever people wouldn't.

Maurice was a disappointment, like being told that Zola's *Restless House* was a dirty novel. Maurice and Alec run away together at the end. That was unlike other gay novels I was reading at the time, which ended with the guillotine, murder around the campfire, lonely overdoses, exhausted departures, or the long farewell of looking back on lost love. Yet the happily ever after of Maurice and Alec was also renunciation. I knew from Colette that gay lovers could retire to a rural paradise. The drama was in falling in love, overcoming obstacles. Or not. P.N. Furbank notes in *E.M. Forster: A Life* that Forster could send the lovers off to an idyllic elsewhere—but not to a London flat. Sex between men was a crime in the UK until 1967.

Harriet Beecher Stowe had similar trouble imagining the social destiny of her light-skinned escaped slaves in

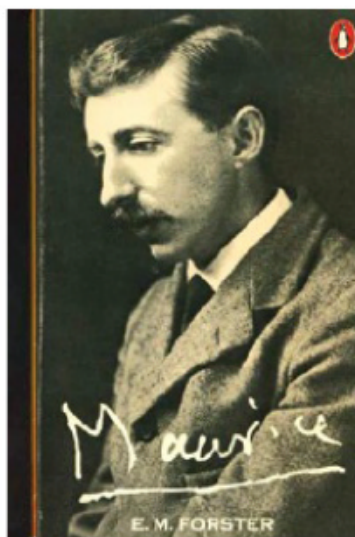
Uncle Tom's Cabin; rather than have George and Eliza move in next door, Stowe dispatches them to Africa as missionaries. The denouement of the freed is always a problem. Verlaine shot Rimbaud. Nijinsky fled Diaghilev and went mad.

Then, overnight, Bloomsbury was as antique to me as Wilde had been to Forster—and so was wanting Rupert Brooke to be one of us. In the late '70s, everybody I thought cool was into Weimar culture. It was an intense antecedent for us in its anger and decadence. The modernist gay past was still present, living in Santa Monica or the Chelsea Hotel, and Auden would never die. It mattered that I was in New York. Gentlemen of a certain age initiated young men into the sly yet compensatory elitism of big city culture—the opera, the philharmonic, the theater, museums, art galleries, classic cinema, reading lists—and the later it got, boys would be boys, boys would be the offspring of the Beats, to a different kind of music, in a different kind of darkness, downtown, in the East Village, where much of the New Wave was gay and all of it high. I had a swell time while it lasted, Langston Hughes said of the Harlem Renaissance.

Forster could send the lovers off to an idyllic elsewhere—but not to a London flat.

FREQUENTED A BAR CALLED THE BAR ON EAST THIRD Street. Or was it East Fourth? It was small, funky, and jammed. The men's room stalls hosted powder-snorting duos and sweat-kissing trios. Then, in the early '80s, guys began to disappear, one by one, back to families that found reasons for sons not to take calls, back to rooms filthy in spite of friends coming by. Finally, my insurance got canceled, and my favorite bartender was gone. He'd been silent for months, but he remembered to smile. In 1985, a friend tried to take his boyfriend home to Sydney to die, but the airline escorted them off the plane in Los Angeles. Then my friend couldn't get an airline to accept his boyfriend's body bag. He died a few years later, never admitting to me what he had.

Susan Sontag used to get calls from stricken strangers who had found her number. I once waited for her while she spent a long time on the phone consoling a terrified soul. *Illness as Metaphor* was just about the only thing out there that told people anything about what it meant to be sick. Several memorials later, the film of *Maurice* was beautiful. Americans love English country houses, Edmund White said.



Ahead of its time: The seminal novel about gay love in early 20th century England was published posthumously.

Brightness falls from the air;
Queens have died young and fair;
Dust hath closed Helen's eye.
I am sick, I must die.
Lord have mercy on us!

—Thomas Nashe

Darryl Pinckney is the author of *High Cotton*, *Black Deutschland*, and *Busted in New York and Other Essays*.

We want to say that the AIDS epidemic is historical, like World War I and burying the flower of a generation. HIV treatment and HIV prevention have advanced such that boys who weren't born when the gay plague first hit do not live under threat. Infection rates have at times crept up again, because guys have run around as though HIV weren't a big deal anymore. A black character in

Matthew Lopez's engaging drama *The Inheritance* asserts that class and race—the ability to pay for the drugs—have too much to do with who now gets infected. Set from 2015 to 2018, *The Inheritance* shows that white dudes can be just as much at risk if they were teenagers, unhoused, jobless, not in school, on drugs, and therefore sexual prey. In the play, AIDS is a story that makes all of Forster's descendants survivors. AIDS may be another chapter of suffering in gay history, but Lopez means for his characters to take control of the story.

The Inheritance is a two-part adaptation of Forster's *Howards End*, which was first published in 1910:

One may as well begin with Helen's letters to her sister.
Howards End.
Tuesday.
Dearest Meg,
It isn't going to be what we expected.

Zadie Smith riffs on the opening of *Howards End* on the first page of *On Beauty*, and Lopez also starts at Forster's beginning. Eleven beautifully barefoot young men (seven white, three black, one brown) arrive onstage and casually settle in with books. They are followed by a well-shod silver-haired gentleman in a gray three-piece suit. Could this be Forster, the presiding presence? A handsome guy appeals to him, wondering how to write their stories, how to begin. We don't yet know that the young man is Leo, who will become a writer, or that the action of the play is Leo's work of memory, captured in his first novel, *The Inheritance*, the manuscript of which he will give to a friend toward the end of the play, telling his friend that in his novel he calls him Henry Wilcox, the owner of Howards End in Forster's novel. The Henry character will read: "We may as well begin with Toby's voice mails to his boyfriend."

In Part I of *The Inheritance*, the boys are squeezing themselves into one another, then squeezing the sperm of betrayal. "Only connect," Forster's "most famous phrase," Toby slurs. He reproaches Forster for not publishing his gay novel at a time when doing so could have changed lives. Forster counters that the past cannot be altered. Now they can tell the stories he couldn't. They should tell their own stories. And so Toby and Eric are striving together in the rent-controlled apartment that has been occupied by members of Eric's family for three generations. That explains why he shares an address with the very rich Henry and his partner of many years, Walter. But Eric faces eviction. His nine closest friends are a chorus arrayed around a movable platform, stepping on and off, alert and ready to blow up Eric's parties. Toby's ambitions for a Broadway hit are about to be realized, and he abandons Eric to his misfortunes, throwing away his proposal of marriage.

Eric revives, thanks to the friendship of Walter, who has also been abandoned, because it suits Henry to hide in the demands of his business life. Lopez's play echoes some of Forster's lines, revises scenes, and uses his plot devices: After Walter's death, Henry and his two sons (from an early marriage to a woman) burn Walter's last-minute instructions that his house, originally a gift from Henry, go to Eric. Whereas Forster's Wilcox family struggles over Howards End, the haunted, nameless upstate New York house in Lopez's play is of little interest to Henry's sons. During the worst of the AIDS epidemic, Walter took strangers there to die in tranquility. Walter

introduced Eric to his beloved house, a model upstage hung in a blue expanse. When Eric returns to the house, the ghosts of dead young men shake hands with him and give their names, one by one.

In Part II, the bill comes due, but it's already been paid by the losers. As in the novel, a sexual secret gets exposed, at a wedding. Henry had been a customer of Leo, who used to work as a hustler. Eric marries Henry anyway. The wedding party is another episode in Toby's spectacular, drunken, druggy unraveling toward an early death. A classmate of mine told me he took pleasure in figuring out equivalents between characters in Forster's novel and Lopez's play. For instance, is Toby the lower-class, culturally yearning Leonard Bast from the novel, or is that Leo? My classmate thinks Eric is the equivalent to the novel's Margaret Schlegel, the healing force who saves Henry's capitalist's soul. Because of Eric, the play's Henry—the real estate mogul and moral coward who runs away from the house, from Walter and the dying—has an epiphany about wasting love and therefore life, but too late.



Literary inheritance: Matthew Lopez reimagines Forster's milieu in contemporary New York.

LOPEZ'S DRAMA IS NOT AFRAID TO BE POLITICAL, not when just to live one's life openly can be a rebellious act still, depending on the context. One of Eric's friends, a black physician, announces his decision to emigrate to Canada, in large part because of the white supremacist hatreds unleashed by Donald Trump's election. Eric's former boss, a software developer and the most promiscuous of his friends, has a violent argument with Henry over the crimes of wealth. He refuses to attend Eric's wedding. A Latino friend's intermittent, brief arias of swish can contain social criticism. Forster's example has been telling them that they are their own models for the realized lives they seek as gay men.

Howards End and *Maurice* are works of affirmation. *The Inheritance* means to stand with them. Forster's bequest to gay literature: the hopeful ending. AIDS wasn't the tragic climax; it was the turning point. Gay history is the true inheritance. I confess I sat there old and thrilled as this handsome cast rode the wit of the dialogue and made the leaps of mood, helped mightily by the accomplished young actors' often being in various states of undress. The theater rocked with laughter only to be on the verge of tears moments later.

Yet the social destiny of freedmen can still be a problem: Why does reward come across as wishful, as propaganda? The end of the play is almost ruined by the victory roll call of happily ever afters. The survivors in Eric's circle all win. Leo will marry a nice guy and die at 67, older than he ever expected to get when Eric rescued him from the streets. Eric will divorce Henry, marry another man, and die at 97, surrounded by children and grandchildren who maintain the house.

The sanctity of marriage was still a churchy thing in the early 2000s when the wretched Tony Blair proposed a civil partnership law to Parliament that would have denied benefits to straight couples with children. The US Supreme Court upheld gay marriage in 2013, the

(continued on page 26)

Forster's bequest to gay literature: the hopeful ending. AIDS wasn't the tragic climax; it was the turning point.

Now available in the U.S. without a prescription!

Blood Sugar Pill Used in China for 54 Years Goes on Sale Nationwide

Approved by doctors nationwide; triggers weight loss and lowers cholesterol, triglyceride and blood pressure levels; non-addictive and side effect free



Popular pill: U.S. doctors are now recommending new Plavinol because it lowers blood sugar, triggers weight loss, and restores cholesterol, blood pressure, and triglycerides levels to normal without side effects.

A pill that lowers high blood sugar in 30-days has been used safely in China for 54 years. It is now available in the United States.

This pill contains an active ingredient that also triggers weight loss and lowers high blood pressure, cholesterol, and triglyceride levels.

The active ingredient comes from a natural compound. It is both safe and healthy. In 54 years of recorded medical use, there are no known harmful side effects.

Now an improved version of this pill is being offered in the United States under the brand name *Plavinol*.

"With daily use, *Plavinol* offers 24-hour relief from blood sugar worries," says Vik Swanson, President of the makers of *Plavinol*.

"This is what the clinical studies have shown and that's why so many U.S. doctors are now recommending it to patients," he added.

WHY SO MUCH EXCITEMENT?

Scientists in China have discovered a natural compound with a known ability to restore healthy glucose levels without side effects.

This compound is not a drug. It is the active ingredient in *Plavinol*. Clinical studies in the U.S. have shown it blocks sugar in the foods you eat from entering your blood.

Many users report healthier blood sugar levels in just days. Others claim to lose weight. Many more say their blood pressure, cholesterol, and triglyceride levels return to normal.

"I struggled with high blood sugar for 15 years," said Jack Yates of Henderson, NV. "But now, *Plavinol* keeps my numbers under control. I lost weight, too — and my cholesterol readings are better than ever," he added.

With so much positive feedback, it's

easy to see why sales are booming for the newly approved *Plavinol* pill.

IMPRESSIVE CLINICAL RESULTS

The clinical trials were conducted by doctors from the Universities of Mississippi, Minnesota, and several health institutes in China.

The results seem hard to believe. Yet, the findings are published in the world's most prestigious medical journals.

Results show those who take *Plavinol's* active ingredient...

- Reduce after-meal glucose spikes
- Lower high blood sugar levels
- Relieve high cholesterol levels
- Cut triglyceride levels
- Lose excess fat

And while everybody knows the dangers of eating foods that contain excess sugar, one study showed that even after patients consumed almost two ounces of pure sugar, *Plavinol's* active ingredient kept their glucose levels within a healthy range.

HOW IT WORKS

The active ingredient in *Plavinol* comes from a natural plant extract called *Morus Alba*. Scientists believe it works by blocking excess sugar in the foods we eat from entering the blood!

Research shows excess blood sugar is the number one cause of Metabolic Syndrome, which is a group of health conditions that appear together in the body.

According to Swanson, "You may have Metabolic Syndrome if you suffer from two or more of the following issues: Diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and high triglyceride levels."

Plavinol's active ingredient is shown to reduce excess sugar in the blood, which is why so many users are seeing a reduction in the symptoms of

Metabolic Syndrome.

WHAT DOCTORS ARE SAYING

"In all my years as a doctor, *Plavinol* is the most exciting new solution to come along for those suffering from high blood sugar," said Dr. Decker Weiss, Integrative Cardiologist and Professional Committee Member of the American Heart Association.

"Many *Plavinol* users report a decrease in high blood sugar within days, followed by a reduction in high blood pressure and cholesterol within the first month," said Dr. James Leaper, Chief Medical Researcher for *Plavinol*.

"*Plavinol* is an excellent choice for overweight people. The clinical trials in support of this pill show it causes weight loss over a 90-day period," said Dr. Holly Lucille, who has appeared on award winning T.V. shows like *The Doctors*, and PBS' *Healing Quest*.

HOW TO GET PLAVINOL

This is the official nationwide release of *Plavinol* in the United States. And so, the company is offering a special discount supply to anyone who calls within the next 48-hours.

A Regional Order Hotline has been set up for local readers to call. This gives everyone an equal chance to try *Plavinol*.

Starting at 7:00 am today, the order hotline will be open for 48-hours.

All you have to do is call TOLL-FREE **1-888-998-3449** and provide the operator with the special discount approval code: PLV176. The company will do the rest.

Important: Due to *Plavinol's* recent media exposure on ABC, CBS, and FOX NEWS, phone lines are often busy. If you call, and do not immediately get through, please be patient and call back. Those who miss the 48-hour special discount offer must pay more for *Plavinol*.

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. All doctors mentioned are remunerated for their services. All clinical studies on *Plavinol's* active ingredient were independently conducted and were not sponsored by the makers of *Plavinol*.

THE DELAWARE WAY

In a small state the lines between business and politics can be hazy. Which could be a big problem for Joe Biden.

JOSEPH N. DISTEFANO

Joe Biden: Hope for Democratic Party in '72?

By Joseph N. Distefano

THE DELAWARE WAY is a phrase that has been used to describe the state's political and business culture. It is a culture that is characterized by a close relationship between business and politics, and by a tradition of political moderation.

Joe Biden, a Delaware native, is a man who has grown up in this culture. He is a man who has learned to navigate the lines between business and politics, and who has learned to do so with a sense of moderation and balance.

Biden is a man who has been successful in both the business and political worlds. He is a man who has been able to find a way to balance the two, and who has been able to do so in a way that has earned him the respect and admiration of his fellow Delawareans.

Biden is a man who is a true representative of the Delaware Way. He is a man who has learned to navigate the lines between business and politics, and who has learned to do so with a sense of moderation and balance.

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JOSEPH N. DISTEFANO

Joe Biden: Hope for Democratic Party in '72?



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ELAWARE IS A SMALL PLACE. TWO DAYS AFTER STATEWIDE ELECTIONS, THE WINNERS AND LOSERS PAIR UP IN horse-drawn carriages and rattle through Georgetown (population 7,427) to literally bury a ceremonial hatchet. School bands play. The crowd chews ox roast sandwiches.

It's a ritual expression of what locals call the Delaware Way, a bipartisan contrast to angry national politics. The Delaware Way can be useful for elected officials—and their friends in business. And family. There's an axiom often repeated in his Senate years by Joe Biden's staff: "Joe says that when someone helps his family, it's just like helping Joe," recited Sam Waltz, a Wilmington business consultant who covered Biden's first Senate reelection campaign as a young reporter.

Soon after Biden was first elected in 1972, banks from three states lined up to finance his brother James Biden's new disco in suburban Wilmington. When the club defaulted, Joe Biden blamed the banks for exploiting his 23-year-old sibling and for pressing his office to get their money back. (They didn't.) Despite this, over the years, many Biden-related projects have proved irresistible to local, national, and lately, Chinese businesspeople.

Joe Biden often talks about his father's difficult career selling used cars. John Hynansky, the son of Ukrainian World War II refugees, had better luck: He built the Delaware-based car dealership Winner Auto Group. State and federal records show Hynansky, his wife, and his children have donated more than \$230,000 to US political campaigns since the 1980s, including at least \$49,000 to Biden.

At a Ford executive's suggestion, in 1994, Hynansky opened an auto import office in the newly independent Ukraine. Five years later, he opened Winner Ford Kyiv. He later added Volvo, Jaguar, Land Rover, Porsche, and what Bentley called "its biggest exclusive dealership in Europe."

In 2008, a month before Biden was elected vice president, Hynansky made his biggest political donation: \$28,500 to the Democratic National Committee. The next summer, Biden told a roomful of Ukrainian leaders in Kyiv, "My very good friend John Hynansky, a very prominent businessman from Delaware, is here." That fall, Winner won its first US Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) loan, in the amount of \$2.5 million.

A federal agency, OPIC had actually halted lending to Ukraine in 1999 over a disputed insurance claim. The Winner deal helped kick off a round of approvals. Three years later, OPIC boosted the loan to \$20 million, so Hynansky could build Winner Autocity in Kyiv. In backing him, OPIC was funding jobs—not in the United States but for Ukrainian salespeople to move cars made mostly in Germany, Sweden, and Britain. By 2011, Hynansky's firm was selling 20 percent of the premium cars in Ukraine.

Hynansky has bet not just on Biden but also on members of his inner circle. In 2015, Biden's former chief of staff Dennis Toner was a leading promoter of the Delaware Board of Trade (DBOT), a digital penny-stock market started after Barack Obama signed a securities deregulation law. Failing to raise money on Wall Street, the group persuaded Tom

The Delaware Way looks a lot like what Gilded Age Tammany Hall politicians used to call legal graft.

Gordon, then head of the county government where Biden held his first elected office, to lend DBOT \$3 million. Hynansky then joined Toner, a United Arab Emirates sheikh, and a Republican state representative as investors.

Also that year, according to Florida property records, Hynansky lent \$500,000 to James Biden, secured by the latter's \$2.5 million home on Keewaydin Island off Florida's Gulf Coast. Biden had landed an executive position at Hill-Stone, a subsidiary of the construction project manager Hill International, which later got a contract to build modular housing in Iraq. Hill chief executive Irvin Richter, convicted of embezzlement in New Jersey 40 years earlier, told

Fox Business that the Biden name "helps him get in the door"—and that he would have put Obama on the board if he could have. Alas, the Iraq deal fell apart.

On Keewaydin, the Bidens added a solar power system, ran up an IRS lien for \$589,000, and sought to flip the property for almost \$6 million. After it was swamped by Hurricane Irma in 2017, they sold the home to a group that included a Pennsylvania car dealer for just \$1.35 million. Hynansky released his mortgage.

By that time, Delaware's cozy business-political relations had suffered a scare. After a property dispute between Hynansky and developer Christopher Tigani, the ensuing litigation exposed records of Tigani illegally



Blurred lines: John Hynansky, a donor with deep ties to Ukraine, lent Joe Biden's brother over \$500,000.

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: AP / CHARLES HARRITY; BING MAPS; AP / CHARLIE NEIBERGALL; COURTESY OF WILMINGTON UNIVERSITY

RIGHT: THE NEWS JOURNAL VIA USA TODAY NETWORK

Joseph N. DiStefano is a staff writer for The Philadelphia Inquirer, which he joined in 1988. He has also worked for Bloomberg LP and the Delaware News Journal.



SENATOR JOSEPH BIDEN FOR PRESIDENT 1988

funneling over-the-limit contributions through his low-level employees to then-Senator Joe Biden; his elder son Beau Biden, then Delaware's attorney general; and others from both parties. In 2011, Tigani pleaded guilty to campaign finance violations and was sentenced to two years in prison. Assistant US Attorney Robert Kravetz blamed the Delaware Way, which he defined as politicians doing favors for well-connected business owners in exchange for contributions after the fact.

Since he was potentially implicated, Beau Biden recused himself and appointed E. Norman Veasey, a retired Delaware chief justice, to investigate. Veasey's report cited the conviction of two more Delaware donors and noted that unnamed out-of-staters had also contributed large sums. He didn't recommend prosecuting the out-of-state donors or the Delaware politicians, saying it wasn't clear the latter knew these contributions were illegal. (Political reporter Celia Cohen later identified one potential donor as Miami developer Michael Adler, who chaired Joe Biden's brief 2008 presidential campaign.)

I visited Veasey the day he released the report, noting that he'd done a lot of work before deciding not to recommend prosecuting any politicians. I asked him why he was still working on a project like this, in his 80s. He looked me in the eye and told me he was helping put his grandchildren through school.

The Delaware Way looks a lot like what Gilded Age Tammany Hall politicians used to call legal graft. Following the Supreme Court's 2016 decision in *McDonnell vs. United States*, which made it tougher to prosecute politicians for taking gifts unless they resulted in "official acts" like legislation or administrative decisions, such arrangements may actually be legal. And given the Trump family's penchant for mixing personal and official business, it's tempting to dismiss the Biden clan's affairs as no crime, no foul. But Biden's friends and backers have won victories that cost the middle-class Americans he claims to champion dearly.

DEMOCRATS CONTROLLED BOTH THE PRESIDENCY and Congress in the late 1970s, when a combination of high inflation and low profits fueled a corporate push to ease federal regulation. Biden worked hard on the 1978 bankruptcy reform bill that first limited recent graduates from claiming bankruptcy protection, and he served on the banking committee that produced the Financial Institutions Regulatory and Interest Rate Control Act of 1978, which stopped states from capping interest charges by out-of-state banks. The Supreme Court's *Marquette v. First of Omaha* ruling that year cemented the banks' freedom to export high interest rates to places that had tried to limit usury.

Biden's bank-friendly approach came at a key time. Guided by lawyers from New York, Delaware would soon pass the Financial Center Development Act, cutting bank taxes and ending rate restrictions. Within a few years, many of the biggest banks in at least 10 of the 12 Federal Reserve districts moved their credit card arms to Delaware. The largest, MBNA Corporation, was spun off from Maryland National Bank by chairman Alfred

Lerner, whose friend Ace Greenberg, chairman of the now defunct Bear Stearns, issued credit-card-backed bonds, rocket-fueling new loans.

MBNA offered accounts to people on mailing lists it bought from colleges and professional organizations, eventually passing DuPont to become Delaware's largest for-profit employer. MBNA executives contributed over \$212,000 to Biden's Senate campaigns, though CEO Charles Cawley and all but two of his 28 top executives were Republicans and gave even more to the national GOP.

In 1996, Biden's cozy relationship with the banks was used against him. A Republican challenger for his Senate seat complained that MBNA's No. 3 executive, John R. Cochran, had bought Biden's Greenville house for the full \$1.2 million list price, despite a weak housing market. MBNA stuck with Biden; even after Wilmington's

News Journal published an internal MBNA letter coordinating employee donations to him, he won reelection easily.

MBNA then hired his son Hunter Biden, fresh out of Yale Law School, as a management trainee. (He stuck out among the mostly state and Catholic college alumni who worked at the bank.) *The New York Times* reported that when Hunter Biden left in 2000 for Washington, DC, and a new lobbying firm, Oldaker, Biden & Belair, MBNA kept him on a \$100,000 annual retainer—not to lobby his father, he said, but for advice on "Internet and privacy law."

With US credit card debt doubling every five years, defaults and bankruptcies rose, too. Joe Biden joined the Republican lawmakers pushing new bankruptcy reforms that would make it tougher for individuals to write off a range of consumer loans. Elizabeth Warren, then a bankruptcy expert at Harvard Law School, warned Biden as early as 2002 that his support for the banks at consumers' expense and his opposition to easing bankruptcy protections for medical and student debt endangered his presidential aspirations.

Via e-mail, longtime Sallie Mae chief executive Al Lord recalls Biden's pro-bank approach as "180 degrees opposite E. Warren's." When Warren urged a provision to stop banks from filing suit against debtors in Delaware's bank-friendly courts and instead make them sue where their customers lived, Biden warned he would kill any bill that hurt Delaware's legal businesses. His mostly Republican coalition passed a stricter bankruptcy reform act in 2005. In 2011, with Biden as vice president, Sallie Mae moved its headquarters to Delaware.

Biden and his staff claim he stood in the middle, forcing lenders to add protections for low-wage workers and single moms. But if he won that battle, America lost the war. Researchers like Wenli Li of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia blame the loss of bankruptcy protections for the sharp rise in home defaults and foreclosures that sparked the Great Recession.



Family compound: The former so-called "Biden bungalow" on Florida's Keewaydin Island.

Biden's friends and backers have won victories that cost the middle-class Americans he claims to champion dearly.

The controversy got personal in 2011, when Beau Biden, as Delaware's attorney general, sided with his New York counterpart, Eric Schneiderman, in calling for a probe of mortgage lenders that had fooled borrowers and investors. "Before any broad immunity is granted, the American people deserve an investigation," he insisted.

But Delaware Governor Jack Markell gave cover to the bankers and their allies, including Joe Biden. Writing to the National Association of Attorneys General, Markell lamented the hard-line states' "scattershot approach," blaming them for scaring banks into "an economic climate that has left millions of Americans" jobless. Only "a strong and vibrant financial services industry" relieved from prosecution would "get our nation's economy moving again."

Nonsense, Beau Biden fired back. "My job is to protect homeowners, investors and all Delawareans" from "the abuses of the mortgage industry that created this economic crisis," he told me in an e-mail at the time.

In 2014, Beau Biden announced that he would run for Markell's job. But the next year he died of brain cancer, at age 46. Joe Biden later wrote that his son "had all the best of me, but with the bugs and flaws engineered out."

BIDEN HAD BEEN VICE PRESIDENT FOR LESS THAN A year when his son Hunter started an investment firm with Christopher Heinz, a stepson of Senator John Kerry, who had replaced Biden as head of the Foreign Relations Committee, and Devon Archer, an investor and Heinz's classmate from Yale. They called their group Rosemont Seneca Partners.

In 2012, Archer and Hunter Biden met with Jonathan Li, who ran Bohai Capital, an investment subsidiary of the China-based travel giant HNA Group. When Joe Biden visited China in 2013, Hunter Biden, who accompanied his father, introduced him to Li.

Shortly after, Li and Rosemont Seneca announced a new venture, BHR (Shanghai) Equity Investment Fund Management Company. "B" was for Li's Bohai, "H" for Harvest Fund Management, backed in part by the state-controlled China Credit Trust, and "R" for Rosemont Seneca plus the Thornton Group, headed by James Bulger, the son of the Massachusetts Senate's longtime president (and the namesake of his mobster uncle, James "Whitey" Bulger). The investors paid \$4.2 million for a stake in the firm, with the Chinese partners as the two largest shareholders, according to the *South China Morning Post*.

BHR focused on "ultra-large-scale and internationally influential projects," Li told a Chinese newspaper. He picked Archer's group, he added, because of the partners' "deep" ties to US politics—including Hunter Biden's.

George Mesires, Hunter Biden's lawyer, wrote last month that Biden has "not received any return on his investment" despite putting up \$420,000 for a 10 percent stake. "There have been no distributions to BHR shareholders" since he invested, Mesires added, promising that Biden would leave the fund's board by the end of the month.

A check of BHR's investment list, a *Financial Times* review of its deals, and other news reports show the fund spread its state-owned parent companies' capital deep into strategic global industries. Examples include:

§ Megvii (Face++), identified by *FT* as a "leading facial



Passing the buck: When his brother's disco defaulted in 1972, Biden tried to shift the blame to the banks.

Progressive Democrats who think 2020 is their year won't soon forget Biden's long fight for the banks and credit card companies and against student debt relief.

Kith and kin: The Delaware corporate headquarters of MBNA, the credit card company that donated to Biden's campaigns and hired his son.

recognition company whose technology was linked to Beijing's mass surveillance of Uighurs in Xinjiang."

§ China General Nuclear, which was blacklisted in August 2019 by the US Commerce Department for "efforts to acquire advanced U.S. nuclear technology and material for diversion to military uses in China."

§ Tenke Fungurume, a mine in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is such a strategic source of copper and cobalt that the US mining giant Freeport-McMoRan received \$400 million from OPIC (the agency that financed Hynansky's Kyiv showroom) in 2008 to develop it. But after upgrades, the company and its partners sold their stake to BHR, whose shares were later bought out by China's state-controlled China Molybdenum.

§ Henniges Automotive, a Detroit-area maker of car parts that was purchased by BHR and a subsidiary of the Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC), which makes Chinese military aircraft. The deal, valued at \$600 million, was the largest AVIC purchase in Detroit since 2011, and it proceeded even though an AVIC affiliate had been added to a US government blacklist in 2014.

When other Biden-related investments turned sour, Chinese investors were ready to help. In 2009, Joe Biden announced more than \$500 million in Energy Department financing and \$21.5 million from the state of Delaware for a California start-up, Fisker Automotive (which at the time was backed by future Biden donor John Doerr's venture capital firm Kleiner Perkins), so it could manufacture electric cars at a factory 3,000 miles from its headquarters—and just five miles from Biden's Greenville home. Addressing more than 1,000 laid-off GM employees at the plant site, Biden presented the funding as pay-back for years of autoworkers' union support.

BUT THE DELAWARE PLANT NEVER OPENED. (IT HAS since been leveled to make room for warehouses.) One blow was the 2012 bankruptcy of Fisker's battery supplier, which was sold at auction to the Wanxiang Group of Shanghai in a deal that required approval from the Obama-Biden administration. Despite borrowing \$300 million from the Energy Department, Fisker itself filed for bankruptcy the next year. Wanxiang bought the firm's remaining assets.

US-based companies with ties to China also took over DBOT, the fledgling penny-stock exchange whose back-



ers include Hynansky and former Biden staff chief Toner. Over the past year, Ideanomics (which owns China Broadband Limited and the Chinese pay-per-view service You on Demand—and was previously known as Seven Stars Cloud Group) acquired DBOT in a share swap.

Ideanomics is a project of Bruno Wu, an entertainment mogul *The New York Times* once called China's Rupert Murdoch. His wife and investing partner, Yang Lan, has been dubbed the Oprah Winfrey of China for her government-backed TV show, with guests like Bill Clinton, Elon Musk, and Henry Kissinger. In 2014, one of the couple's companies, Sun Media, announced a Hollywood investment partnership with Shanghai's Harvest Fund Management, the "H" in BHR Partners.

In addition to DBOT, Ideanomics invested in a state-backed redevelopment plan for West Hartford, Connecticut. Ideanomics vice chairman Shane McMahon is the son and business partner of pro-wrestling moguls (and longtime Donald Trump backers) Vince and Linda McMahon. Trump made Linda McMahon his Small Business Administration chief, but she quit this spring to head his reelection super PAC America First Action.

Though Ideanomics' share price has fallen since the DBOT deal, company spokesman Tony Sklar said it will zoom if the exchange can get its latest plans approved in Washington. He added that Hynansky, now an Ideanomics shareholder, "is a super, super fellow," Shane McMahon "is a super, super guy," and business is looking up.

Progressive Democrats who think 2020 is their year won't soon forget Biden's long fight for the banks and credit card companies against credit card and student debt relief. China hawks will keep pointing to how Chinese investors always seem ready to buy troubled investments from Biden allies.

President Trump's conflicts may be bigger and bolder and more likely to spark criminal charges or even corrupt US policy. But is this really the best Democrats can do: to point out that Trump is worse? They tried that in 2016—and it didn't end well. ■

(continued from page 20)

celebrations providing cover for the court's gutting of the historic Voting Rights Act the day before. The same court said nobody has to bake us wedding cakes. Nevertheless, the right to form a marital union with another man or woman is, for me, a profound change in gay and lesbian life, and never mind that saying "gay" these days is just about as out of it as the word "Negro." It used to be that when sons told parents they were gay, most parents assumed that meant a furtive, incomplete life. Now they know that gay doesn't mean their children won't be fulfilled—at least not because of that. Those Obama-era equality rallies owe something to the Reagan- and Bush-era ACT UP sit-ins.

Some black people feel black cultural authenticity can be lost through integration or assimilation. Gay people aren't worried about gay culture as they find increasing acceptance in the mainstream. When I was young, the women's movement and gay liberation encouraged us to be proud that we were not headed toward marriage and the suburbs. We said straight society envied us; we said the point was to change society, not join up. We wanted to be different, maybe because we could never imagine the freedom to be like everyone else. *The Inheritance* is a surprise. I didn't expect to leave the theater thinking about historical perspective, self-acceptance, the obsolescence of the closet—for the lucky—and the seafarers I knew who hadn't had the time to learn how to greet with an equal eye, as Forster put it, the deep that they were entering and the shore they had to leave. ■

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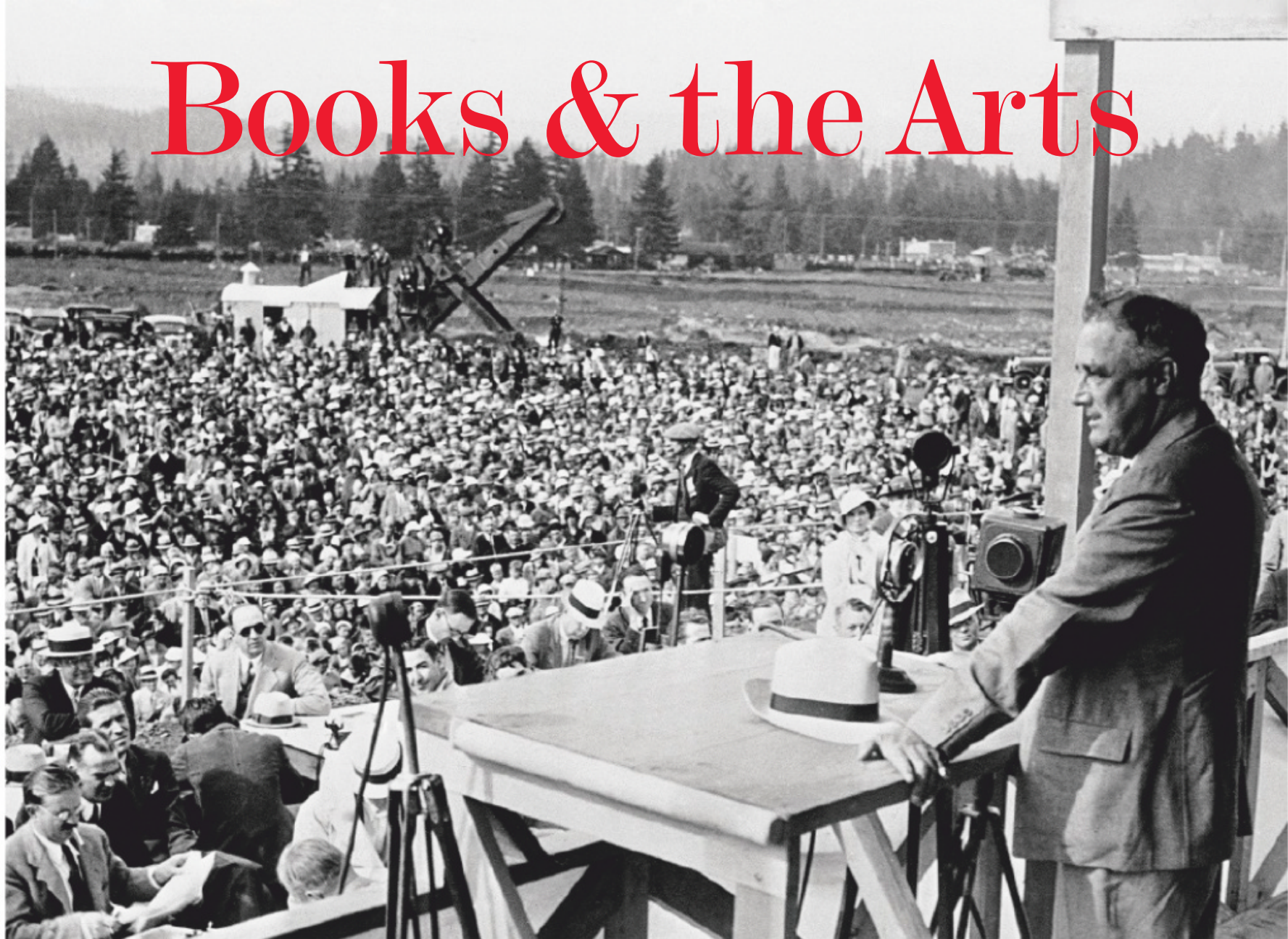
PUBLISHER EMERITUS: Victor Navasky

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: E-mail to letters@thenation.com (300-word limit). Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity.

SUBMISSIONS: Go to TheNation.com/submission-guidelines for the query form.

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Books & the Arts



SWEPT UP BY HISTORY

Did the New Deal need FDR?

by KIM PHILLIPS-FEIN

Although Winston Churchill once compared meeting Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the feeling of uncorking your first bottle of champagne, many who encountered the 32nd president as a young man would later express their great surprise at the role he came to play in American history. The principal of Roosevelt's exclusive preparatory school described him as "a quiet, satisfactory boy...not brilliant." At Harvard, Roosevelt enjoyed beer nights, football, and shooting ducks, perfectly content with his B in history and D-plus in Latin. Frances Perkins, who would become his labor secretary, was distinctly unimpressed when she met Roosevelt in 1910, shortly before he was elected to the New York State Senate: "There was nothing particularly interesting about the tall, thin young man with

the high collar and pince-nez.... He had a youthful lack of humility, a streak of self-righteousness, and a deafness to the hopes, fears and aspirations which are the common lot."

How the pampered only child of a wealthy landowning family in the Hudson Valley should come to stand before a screaming crowd in Madison Square Garden in October 1936 and proclaim that he welcomed the hatred of the country's "economic royalists" is one of the great mysteries of American history. What enabled a man raised in the cocoon of privilege to take the imaginative leap necessary to create the New Deal? Why should someone whose self-interest would seem to point to maintaining the existing society have described himself as a "prophet of a new order," as Roosevelt did when he accepted the Democratic nomination for the presidency in 1932?

These questions have been taken up by FDR's biographers for decades, and

they are at the center of Robert Dallek's new book, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Political Life*. A scholar who has written about John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Richard Nixon, Dallek tells us that he turned to Roosevelt to remind a younger generation of what "great presidential leadership" looks like. More generally, he wants to reassure those questioning the underlying wisdom of the democratic political system in the wake of the 2016 election that it "has been capable of generating candidates for high office whose commitment to the national interest exceeded their flaws and ambitions."

To develop this argument, Dallek offers us a portrait of a more political Roosevelt, someone who loved the prosaic skirmishes of democratic life. This Roosevelt is not so much a patrician heir as a stumping pol giving speeches, campaigning for office, negotiating legislative compromises, reading the mood of a crowd, and managing to win over a

Kim Phillips-Fein is the author of *Invisible Hands and Fear City*.

roomful of skeptics and opponents. Being a politician—someone driven by the desire to win votes, garner public adulation, and exercise power—can involve more, Dallek tells us, than sheer ego, flamboyance, and a relentless Twitter finger. For Dallek, what defines political leadership in a democracy is the ability to translate an intuitive “feel for the public mood” into lasting social and institutional change.

But Dallek’s version of FDR’s story might not be as reassuring for American liberalism as he thinks. Roosevelt governed as he did more because of the swirl of social movements and ideas that surrounded him than because of anything intrinsic to his character or political sensibilities. He encountered tremendous resistance that he did not entirely know how to meet. Having started his career as a good-government reformer and then embraced a far more confrontational politics centered on support for a welfare state, Roosevelt changed with the times he lived in, times that he did not shape alone and that were not produced just by his good-spirited liberal politicking.

Dallek’s book, while focused on FDR, also reminds us of another important force in moments of uncertainty and upheaval. Liberals and leftists today are intent on winning the White House back from Donald Trump, and most have placed their hopes in the campaigns of Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren (with Warren capturing much of the liberal camp and Sanders staking out a more intensely working-class populism). But Roosevelt’s evolution as a political figure points to a different locus of power, namely the social movements—especially the labor movement—and ideas that were already taking shape before he came on the scene and that pushed him to positions he would not have taken otherwise. The New Deal era as a whole challenges us to consider the important role that social forces outside the gated institutions of American democracy play in changing the balance of political power. The dilemma today is not so much who our new FDR will be as it is what movements and ideas could help guide such a figure as we attempt to address our current economic and environmental crises.

One of the features of Dallek’s work is his sensitivity to the psychological dimensions of power. (He is an honorary member at a California psychoanalytic institute.) This was true in his studies of Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon, and here, too, he lingers over the dimensions of FDR’s life that pushed him

Franklin D. Roosevelt

A Political Life

By Robert Dallek

Penguin. 704 pp. \$22

to become an “establishment rebel.” But these were not really individual character traits so much as they were reflections of Roosevelt’s uncertain times, and readers of Dallek’s book will find it hard to escape the sense that the world from which Roosevelt emerged is now almost completely gone.

Dallek begins the story of FDR’s life in the genteel society of Hyde Park, New York. Born in 1882, Roosevelt was the descendant of an old New York family that had become wealthy through the West Indian sugar trade and Manhattan real estate. An adored only child, he went with his family every summer to Campobello Island off the Canadian coast, where he rode horses, fished, and swam with his father. When he went to preparatory school, he was thrown by having to compete with peers for attention for the first time. He loved athletics and played on the football team, even though he was unsuited physically for the sport. At Harvard, too, the young Roosevelt continued to strive for the admiration of his contemporaries. The “greatest disappointment of my life,” he later recalled, came when he was blackballed for membership in Harvard’s ultra-exclusive Porcellian Club. Dallek contends that Roosevelt spent years seeking to overcome this relatively minor snub—just one of many signs of the extraordinary privilege and assurance that shaped his youthful years.

After graduating from Harvard, Roosevelt showed little interest in the quiet life of a landed gentleman. Nor did he desire to go into business and become even richer. Instead, he longed to win public approval and regard. Like his cousin Teddy Roosevelt, FDR belonged to a social elite that inculcated in him a profound sense that his position gave him both the right and the obligation to exercise political power. Although he hailed from a world of wealth and property, he did not share the capitalist ethos of many of his era’s leading businessmen. The notion that the market automatically confers justice, that businesses need only accumulate profits relentlessly to demonstrate their moral purpose, and that life’s meaning derives from ever more extreme acts of consumerism were completely alien to him as a scion of America’s old money. As he wrote in a college essay exploring his family history, the Roosevelts believed that having been “born in a good position, there was no excuse for them if they did not do their duty by the community.”

These aristocratic inclinations coexisted with a stubborn heterodoxy that Dallek argues expressed itself in his friendships. While Roosevelt was certainly no bohemian, he amassed many acquaintances who were outsiders in one way or another, often making them close friends and advisers. After his election as a state senator in 1910, he teamed up with Louis McHenry Howe, a veteran journalist with a face scarred from a teenage bicycle accident, who lacked wealth or an established place in the Albany political machine. Howe went on to manage FDR’s campaigns, signed his notes to Roosevelt “your slave and servant,” and referred to him as the “future president” years before the fact. (Howe also encouraged Eleanor Roosevelt to expand her role in public life in the 1920s, and he moved into the White House with the Roosevelts when they went to Washington.) FDR’s private secretary, Marguerite “Missy” LeHand, worked for him for 21 years and never married; she held a prominent role in the White House, participating in the president’s poker games, organizing the daily White House happy hour (the “children’s hour”), and operating like a chief of staff. His longtime friend Harry Hopkins, a former social worker who was briefly a member of the Socialist Party, not only ended up heading the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) but also lived in the White House.

At times, these relationships were troubled. Dallek documents the myriad well-known tensions in the Roosevelt marriage. Although scholars like Blanche Wiesen Cook have analyzed Eleanor Roosevelt’s relationship with journalist Lorena Hickok, Dallek portrays these problems primarily in terms of FDR’s irritation with his serious, principled wife, whose moral engagement with civil rights and the desperate poverty of the Depression far exceeded his. According to Dallek, Roosevelt just wanted someone to joke and relax with at the end of the day. (Questionably, the biographer seems to take the president’s side in viewing Eleanor Roosevelt as a killjoy, despite providing ample evidence of her dry sense of humor.) But even when they were strained, the proliferation of these bonds with unusual and idiosyncratic people suggests his willingness to depart from certain established ways.

Dallek also explores another part of Franklin Roosevelt’s personal life that shaped his public career: his polio and paralysis. What is most striking in Dallek’s description is how carefully Roosevelt—with the support of his wife and Howe—staged his recovery from polio. The Roosevelt family was at

Campobello in 1921 when FDR was stricken ill. The day before, he had gone sailing and swimming in the ocean, jogged back and forth across the island, and volunteered to help fight a fire. It was a typical summer day for him; he loved sports and all kinds of physical activity. He went to bed tired, woke up with a fever, and by the next day was unable to stand. The man who believed in the masculine virtues of exertion and the “strenuous life” espoused by Teddy Roosevelt would never walk unassisted again.

For Dallek, what matters in this ordeal is primarily the extreme determination that Franklin Roosevelt showed in managing not just his recovery but also the popular perception of it. He insisted there would be no permanent injury long after it was clear that there would. He feared that his body would provoke “pity and revulsion” and set for himself a somewhat unusual goal for his physical therapy: that people would begin to “forget that he was a cripple.” He was absolutely committed to showing that the course of his life would be unchanged by his illness. “I’m not going to be conquered by a childish disease,” he vowed. Seven years after his paralysis, he was elected governor of New York. While others have seen in FDR’s illness hints of what might have made him so open to aiding others laid low by misfortune, for Dallek the main import is the way it made him all the more eager to achieve political triumph.

Roosevelt was elected president easily in 1932, winning the Democratic Party’s nomination over his political rival Al Smith and then cruising past a dour Herbert Hoover in the general election. The incumbent was so unpopular that Roosevelt’s running mate, John Nance Garner, told the challenger that all he’d have to do to win would be to stay alive until November. Indeed, Roosevelt won 42 of the 48 states.

But what to do with the spoils of victory? Other scholars have assessed the virtues and limits of the New Deal: the impact that it had on unemployment and the Depression, the way it reified racial categories, the channeling of support to men instead of women, the way it both stimulated and frustrated reforms. This kind of analysis is not really Dallek’s project; he focuses on the political victories of FDR’s first term rather than his policy achievements. In the chapters on the New Deal, we get detailed pictures of the close relationship that Roosevelt cultivated with the press (holding twice-weekly informal briefings), of how emotional he became during the fireside chats that brought

his voice over the radio into millions of homes, and of the events of the second Bonus Army march on Washington, DC, by World War I veterans seeking pension payments in May 1933. Whereas Hoover had greeted the veterans’ encampment with tanks, FDR provided three meals a day and unlimited coffee. “Hoover sent the army,” one veteran observed. “Roosevelt sent his wife.”

But FDR’s political skills could not change American institutions. He tried all kinds of different strategies to combat the crisis of the Great Depression, from federal deposit insurance to the National Recovery Administration to the expansion of emergency relief and the hiring of young men through the Civilian Conservation Corps. None of these programs eradicated the high unemployment and precarity of the decade. Over the course of his first term, Roosevelt saw popular unrest rise as a wave of strikes (some led by communist and Trotskyist organizers) rippled through the country in 1934 and the Townsend clubs and other populist mobilizations demanded relief from extreme poverty and insecurity as well as steps to achieve a political economy not quite so hopelessly tilted toward the rich.

Roosevelt did not create any of this pressure from below, and he might not have done what came next without it. But with organized labor, social movements, and radical intellectuals pressing him from the left, he was able to shift course. The result was the Wagner Act, which established for many (though not all) workers the legal right to organize a union and created federal enforcement mechanisms to compel employers to negotiate, and the Social Security Act.

Working-class discontent was only one side of the political ferment of the 1930s, and Dallek offers a particularly strong account of Roosevelt’s mounting frustration and confusion as aggressiveness toward the New Deal grew on the right, both within other branches of government and among the economic elite. The Supreme Court proved an implacable obstacle to New Deal reforms, and after Roosevelt’s landslide reelection in 1936, he pressed for “reform” of the court—which for him meant packing it with justices more sympathetic to his social and economic programs. This only galvanized conservative opposition within the House and Senate and helped mobilize the business class. “There has been no mandate from the people to rape the Supreme Court or tamper with the Constitution,” Virginia Senator Carter Glass declared.

The court reform bill went nowhere—yet in the end, it didn’t matter, since the

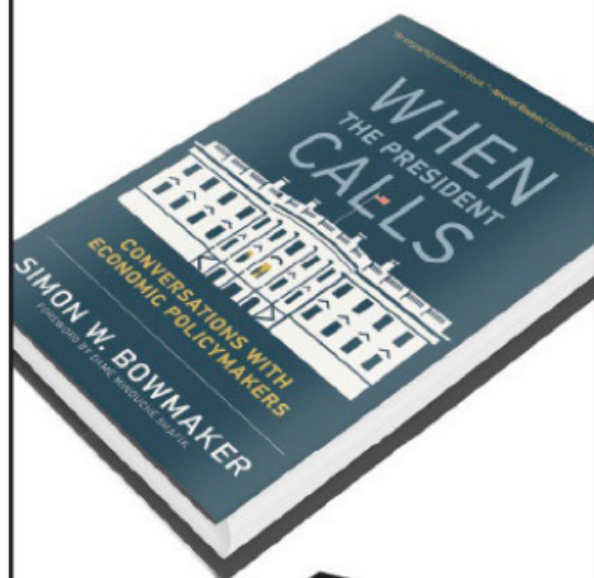
Supreme Court began to back New Deal programs and several conservative justices retired. But Roosevelt now recognized that he was at war, though he was loath to ally himself too closely with the labor movement. As the economy sank back into recession and conservative Democrats began to point their fingers at alleged communists in the WPA and other agencies, Roosevelt tried to purge the most reactionary Democrats from leadership positions, triggering an open conflict over who controlled the party. A group of Southern Democrats and Northern Republicans wrote up a Conservative Manifesto that openly distanced them from the New Deal. Businessmen and the right also became more vitriolic, while the left pressed FDR for changes that went well beyond any he was willing to make.

Dallek may have intended to capture the political quandary that Roosevelt faced in the late 1930s as well as his unwillingness to genuflect before the sanctity of the Supreme Court. But what is really most interesting here is what it suggests about the limits of presidential power or, indeed, the usefulness of focusing on the presidency to understand what was going on in the 1930s. The kinds of changes that the New Deal brought elicited tremendous resistance outside Washington, which renders any narrative of FDR or liberalism or the New Deal that ends in triumph an incomplete one, since it was outside the venerable institutions of the capital that new forms of right-wing power took hold. The ferocity of the corporate response to the Wagner Act, the intensifying antagonism of the congressional right, the ominous rumblings on the far right in the late 1930s—had the United States not entered World War II, many of the accomplishments of the New Deal might have come under attack much more quickly. Roosevelt liked being a leader when the opposition was in disarray. He enjoyed far less the experience of real political combat.

The intense hostility to the New Deal matters in other ways, too. All of its victories—the Wagner Act, Social Security, the public works projects that built roads and dams and schools—are notable for who and what they left out. As many historians have noted, the exclusion of domestic and agricultural workers helped to enshrine the regional and racial disparities that would largely determine American politics for the rest of the 20th century. The reliance on private sector entities and firm-by-firm collective bargaining for social benefits created the partial welfare state that we live with now. The embrace of public spending



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during World War II built the military state and also the mass consumerism that has fueled climate change. In other words, the very institutions that created liberalism helped generate the political conditions that would continue to unmake its moral and political authority and, by the 1970s, serve to undermine it.

To understand what happened to American liberalism, we must look beyond the presidency and certainly beyond FDR. The forces of reaction and progress, of white supremacy and social and political equality, were present in the 1930s, and the resolutions that the New Deal provided were only temporary. Roosevelt the politician sought to build coalitions, but he was often unwilling to face or confront the contradictions that came with the kinds of coalitions he built. He may have sensed the fragile foundations of the new order he was trying to create, which may account, in part, for just how uncertain he was when presented with a deepening social conflict that could not be resolved through charm or force of will. His reluctance in the late 1930s and early '40s to ally himself more forcefully with unions and the left—and the ambivalence that many of the liberals around him felt toward social movements outside the halls of power—shaped the kinds of solutions the New Deal provided, limiting them in ways that would reverberate throughout the rest of the century and to the present day.

Dallek's biography ends with World War II. Like many scholars, he credits FDR with recognizing from an early point the grave dangers of fascism and Nazism and criticizes him, rightly, for refusing to do more to welcome European Jews into the United States as they desperately sought visas. Dallek shows, too, how FDR brushed aside any critiques of the decision to place 120,000 Japanese Americans in internment camps after Pearl Harbor. What's most fascinating about the last chapters of the book is how much anxiety there was in Roosevelt's inner circle about his health as the war went on and how isolated he felt during the wartime years. Dallek makes it appear that Franklin and Eleanor had almost no real intimate connection by the late 1930s, the dynamic between them having become primarily one of resentment and "political convenience." FDR's emotional support, Dallek argues, came increasingly from his cousin Daisy Suckley, whose affectionate and intimate correspondence he quotes extensively. "Do you know that I have never had anyone just sit around and take care of me like this before," Roosevelt told

her at one point when she was tending him while he had a fever in 1943.

Dallek suggests that Roosevelt's health was in precipitous decline even before he ran for a fourth term in 1944 and that he was likely in the late stages of the heart disease that would ultimately kill him. His doctor wrote in a secret memo that "if Mr. Roosevelt were elected President again," he would not have "the physical capacity to complete another term." Roosevelt saw no alternative, though. The desire to override physical constraints that had long motivated him pushed him to stay in office.

For Dallek, this self-sacrifice proves the paramount example of Roosevelt's noblesse oblige. But in depicting FDR's political and emotional weaknesses in the 1940s, Dallek also points to some of the tensions and problems of the New Deal—not least the extent to which it relied on the veneration of Roosevelt to keep a political coalition together. By presenting a more human Roosevelt, Dallek encourages us to also see the necessity of building the political infrastructure—the social movements, union organizers, radical publications, striking teachers, grass-roots activists—on which any more lasting changes would necessarily rely. If the Green New Deal and Medicare for All (let alone any larger transformations) are ever to become political reality, it will be because of these kinds of historical actors and their role in shifting what seems possible.

The rarefied social world that nurtured FDR is very different from any that endures today, as is the business class that opposed him. But the current problems of liberalism may not be so different from those of the New Deal era. Ambivalent even now about a more confrontational politics, liberals tend to place their faith in the putative power of innovation and technocratic elites to resolve what are at heart problems of brute power and inequality. For all that has changed since the 1930s, this remains a common thread. While Dallek perhaps has another lesson in mind, his new biography reminds us that today we see Roosevelt as we do not so much because of who he was or what he was able to accomplish but because of the efforts of millions of other Americans who struggled in the Depression years: the men and women whose imagination, bravery, and forgotten decisions to defy established authority in the midst of the worst economic crisis of their lives forged an opening without which Roosevelt might well have remained the haughty man with the pince-nez, always removed from the bitterness of the world. ■



COLOR BLIND

Thomas Chatterton Williams's argument against race

by ISMAIL MUHAMMAD

Early in Nella Larsen's 1929 novella *Passing*, Clare Kendry speaks nervously of her daughter Margery's birth. "I nearly died of terror the whole nine months before Margery was born," she confesses. She is, for all intents and purposes, a white woman married to a wealthy white man. Yet she finds herself fearing that her child's birth will reveal her for what she is: a black woman who passes for white. If a child of Clare's came out dark, it would be evidence of her passing. Luckily, Margery was born fair skinned. "Thank goodness, she turned out all right."

A similar scene unfolds at the beginning of Thomas Chatterton Williams's new memoir, *Self-Portrait in Black and White: Unlearning Race*. In 2013, Williams—the

son of a white woman and a black man—and his white French wife are living in Paris when she gives birth to their daughter, Marlow. Like Margery, Marlow arrives with fair skin. But this is not a comfort to Williams; instead, it comes as a shock. "It took my sluggish mind a moment to register and sort the sounds; and then it hit me that [the doctor] was looking at *my* daughter's head and reporting back that it was *blond*," he recalls.

Unlike Clare's child, Williams's blond baby is not the cause of relief but of psychic agitation. For Williams, she's a portal into a new conception of his own racial identity. "I was aware...however vaguely, that whatever personal identity I had previously inhabited, I had now crossed into something new and different," he writes. While Williams had long considered himself black, Marlow's arrival unsettled his assumptions about how real race is to begin with. "The sight of this blond-haired, blue-eyed, impossibly fair-

skinned child shocked me—along with the knowledge that she was indubitably mine," he writes. How can the world consider this child black, and what does it say about his racial identity that he has fathered her? Even more important, his daughter's birth raises a set of deeper existential and political questions. What does it say about race that some of the key assumptions that buttress Western conceptions of racial identity—that one's skin color can tell us one's race, for instance—dissolve in the face of reality's manifold intricacies?

Marlow's arrival leads Williams toward introspection and from there to a full-throated denunciation of racial identity as a mere abstraction. He announces, fervently and often, that race is nothing but an oppressive fiction that enables precisely those evils that anti-racist critics condemn. "I want to say that I will no longer enter into the all-American skin game that demands you select a box and define yourself by it." It is, he adds, "a mistake for any of us to reify something that is as demonstrably harmful as it is fictitious." Williams is just one man, but he, at least, has elected to "walk away" from what he views as a confidence game.

Self-Portrait wants to be two things at once: a call to arms against the constricting power of race as an identity, which Williams calls a "philosophical and imaginative disaster," as well as a follow-up to his 2010 memoir, *Losing My Cool*. As such, the new book discusses his incredibly specific cultural background and intellectual development and attempts to sort through the questions that his biography raises, questions that cannot be easily generalized to fit other people's experiences. This necessarily means that Williams extrapolates from his personal story to make categorical proclamations about the nature of racial identity. Yet while *Self-Portrait* can be deeply felt and full of introspective insight, it is also a myopic self-involved affair that often ignores important past and present discussions around race, including the genre of the passing narrative, which also interrogated the soundness of racial identification but resisted generalizing any conclusions into a politics and a worldview. With Williams, the result is a book that engages the question of race head-on but often only in the most superficial fashion, one that confuses personal biography with sociology and history. As a result, it lacks the imaginative capacity to see that no matter how socially constructed racial identities are, our lived experience of those identities—the cultures,

Ismail Muhammad is the reviews editor at The Believer. His work has appeared in The New York Times, Bookforum, and other venues.

communities, values, prejudices, policies, and socioeconomic obstacles that follow from inhabiting social constructs—is anything but fictitious and cannot simply be willed out of existence. Perhaps even more important, by examining the experience of race from his vantage point alone, Williams fails to see how racial identification, while often deployed as a mechanism to create stratification, can also be an empowering act. For many, identifying as black is not merely an imposition but also an opportunity to interrogate the underpinnings of race.

As in *Losing My Cool*, Williams in *Self-Portrait* traces his idiosyncratic stance on race and identity back to his childhood. Born in New Jersey in 1981, he grew up in an eclectic home. His father was a black academic from the segregated South, his mother a white woman from a conservative Southern California family. The two got married and migrated east to a white neighborhood in New Jersey, where they raised Williams and his brother. Though his father thought of his children as unquestionably black, the family was isolated from much of New Jersey's African American community, and as a result, Williams grew up with the sense that he lacked a larger group identity. "As a child I often wondered why I had no greater clan to claim for myself, though...I've come to further appreciate other, subtler advantages of being cut off from any substantial we," he reflects. This is the firmament in which he began to conceive of himself, above all, as a sovereign individual unshackled by the claims of a collective.

The young Williams soon discovered that such willed estrangement did not apply to matters of race, even if he acted as though they did. To his white classmates, he was still a black boy. After seeing him swinging from a bar in the school bathroom, one named Evan blocked Williams from leaving the room and called him a "little fucking monkey." "I could hear his laughter behind me as I made my way back to the cafeteria," Williams recalls, "my heart pumping staccato, my face singed with the heat of self-awareness, my inexperienced mind fumbling for the meaning behind what had just transpired."

This and other experiences of racialization were painful for Williams, but they also helped give him a sense of belonging. He now realized that he was black, even if he was living in a neighborhood and attending a school that were largely white. For him,

Self-Portrait in Black and White

Unlearning Race

By Thomas Chatterton Williams

W.W. Norton & Company. 192 pp. \$25.95

the embrace of this identity meant cultivating a specific vision of blackness rooted in hip-hop, basketball, and thuggish behavior that bordered on caricature. By frequenting basketball courts and inhaling BET, by learning to tilt his caps at the ideal angle and say "nigga" the right way, he writes, he acquired a certain form of blackness and gradually began to see himself as "an inherently black man, and one who could only ever be complete alongside a woman who was 'black.'" (Williams insists on placing signifiers of racial identity in scare quotes, a tic ostensibly meant to unsettle our assumption that such signifiers are natural.)

It was only after two sojourns in France—one summer spent studying there and a year spent teaching English in the northern part of the country after he graduated from college—that he began to question his racial identity. For one thing, he found that in France his identity became a Rorschach test for other people's assumptions. On one occasion he met a French Algerian man who assumed Williams was an Arab and told him that he couldn't possibly be black; on another, he listened as a white tourist cracked a racist joke in front of him, not realizing that he was black. (Upon being informed, the tourist confessed that he thought Williams was "Mediterranean.") The accumulated effect of these experiences is to impress on him that "our identities really are a constant negotiation between the story we tell about ourselves and the narrative our societies like to recite." For Williams, it becomes clear that identity is always subject to change.

It is difficult to disagree with parts of Williams's argument. He is right that identity is ultimately an amorphous concept, a cultural buoy to which we cling in the turbulent waters of experience, and there is a good reason this notion is a central theme in so much of 20th and 21st century writing on race. Writers of the African diaspora, from W.E.B. Du Bois to Ralph Ellison to Zadie Smith, have tilled this ground fruitfully, leaning on a philosophically pragmatist conception of identity shaped by experience instead of essence, one that insists the textures of lived experience will always exceed racial categories without fully abolishing them. As far back as 1903, Du Bois made this pragmatist case for cultural diffusion: "I sit with Shakespeare and he winces not," he

proclaimed in a famous line from "Of the Training of Black Men," an essay from *The Souls of Black Folk*. "Across the color line, I move arm in arm with Balzac and Dumas, where smiling men and welcoming women glide in gilded halls."

Williams draws from this rich intellectual and political tradition. But to make his point, he lurches between reflections on his life in a multiracial marriage and ideas drawn from the likes of George Packer, Adrian Piper, Glenn Loury, Henry Louis Gates Jr., and Albert Murray, alternating between memoir and argument in a haphazard fashion and without adequately discussing sociopolitical structures. At one point, the proceedings dissolve into a defensive point-by-point rebuttal of a colleague's critique that his analysis relies too much on his experience as a fair-skinned black person and refuses to engage with race's sociopolitical aspects, namely those that render personal agency meaningless in matters of structural inequality. While it is admirable that Williams includes her challenge, his response is far less compelling. Addressing a question about how her dark-skinned brother would unlearn race, Williams answers that a dark-skinned black man's exit from race "would amount to an achieved perspective that would require some real time and effort on his part to research and learn to articulate." That dark-skinned brother must exercise his individual sovereignty, systemic policy-based racism (and the institutions and cultures it produces) be damned.

Again, Williams is not entirely wrong. There are ways in which each of us can will ourselves out of racialization and racism's most pernicious dynamics by questioning the intellectual and cultural premises that white supremacist ideology has handed down to us. But the structures and prejudices that racialization has created are not ideas and culture alone; they are also embodied in institutions of politics, law, and economics. They are manifest in the ways we interact with one another every day, and they are also present in how we work and exchange goods and in how our government operates and our legal system is organized. Race is not just an identity you can shrug off. It's a power structure that people navigate day in and day out, one that is imposed from without and shaped from within. *Self-Portrait's* frequently personal frame doesn't allow Williams to fully acknowledge this reality, even as he proceeds to universalize his experiences as representative of contemporary black life.

The story of Williams's adolescence will be familiar to anyone who has read *Losing My Cool*, in which he discusses what he sees as the irreconcilable conflict between hip-hop culture and literature. Ultimately, he chooses the latter and escapes from what he believes is the doomed world of urban blackness. If it's not already apparent from my summary, *Losing My Cool* indulges in a conservative perspective on contemporary black culture that diagnoses many of its artifacts and expressions as fundamentally pathological.

In language that feels inspired more by the Moynihan Report than the black autobiographical tradition, Williams repeatedly condemns urban black culture as toxic. In one passage, he mocks his black classmates' decision to mourn the rapper Notorious B.I.G. on the anniversary of his death. "[Like] our parents' generation with Dr. King, we knew exactly where we were the moment we learned the rapper had died.... I was just as besotted with Biggie as my classmates were." And yet, he adds, "I was also torn between allegiance to the fallen drug dealer and something...coming from deep in the back of my head or conscience. I knew for an irrefutable fact that none of the other kids I was looking at had ever managed to crease the spine of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* or *The Souls of Black Folk*."

Never mind that few white teenagers manage to read either of those books. The shocking thing here is that Williams views hip-hop not as art or an internally coherent body of knowledge that we might learn from but as an impediment in his peers' path to another, more enlightened form of culture. Biggie is not a master of the English language but a mere "drug dealer"; his classmates are not art enthusiasts but hoodwinked idiots.

Self-Portrait is laced with similar conservative caricatures of black culture that can be grating to encounter. When Williams recounts his adolescent use of the word "nigga," it doesn't trigger memories of a consistent and self-contained urban culture but instead a tendency toward reflexive thought. "[This] is...what my classmates and I called ourselves, the defensive embrace of the way the Evans of the world already lazily viewed us—the superlative, in many ways, of what so many of us really did aspire or resign ourselves to be." For him, the 1990s hip-hop he once embraced is devoid of content, a set of empty gestures rather than a culture. This is a familiar and

pernicious strain of black conservatism, one that rejects urban black culture in favor of middle-class refinement.

So while Williams offers a disclaimer near the start of the memoir that he is not rejecting blackness so much as rejecting "the legitimacy of the entire racial construct in which blackness functions as one orienting pole," I find it difficult to accept that statement at face value. Like his previous book, *Self-Portrait* drips with disdain for most forms of black culture that don't exhibit the erudite, bourgeois self-possession that his father modeled for him, and this disregard hinders his larger argument as well. Williams cannot see blackness as anything other than a thicket of pathologies and disorders, one self-defeating side of a Manichaean dyad, always engaged in a fatal dance with whiteness. To get at what he desires most, unadulterated sovereignty, Williams must let go of his blackness. His marriage to his French wife, Valentine, and the birth of their daughter help enable such a release, in his view. Marlow's birth serves as a confirmation of the fictitious qualities of race and thus becomes, as Williams observes in an earlier context, "a kind of freedom—a sovereign liberty to improvise and create the self without external constraints."

One can look askance at Williams's insistence on "sovereign liberty," which smacks of a retrograde and dangerous version of liberal politics that imagines each and every one of us can be, under the right circumstances, autonomous individuals, even if so much of what gives this autonomy meaning is the product of collective life. Far more frustrating than the ways in which Williams strips human freedom of its social context is that he seems to lack any sense of nuance when it comes to contemporary discourse around the question of blackness and racial identity. He repeatedly conflates racist and anti-racist thought, charging them both with the sin of reducing people to essentialist racial identities. That is a disingenuously broad caricature: While white supremacist thought constructs racial essences as a way to engender and protect racialized power, anti-racist thought views race as an analytic through which we might understand and destroy the racial order. In close readings that aim to demonstrate the anti-racist critique's complicity in perpetuating racism, Williams's refusal to reckon with this difference becomes clear.

In a reading of Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me* (a critical hobby-

horse that Williams continues to ride even though Coates has moved past it), Williams uses Coates's heated confrontation with a white woman who has just shoved his son out of her way as they were leaving a movie theater in Manhattan to portray him as a thinker whose rigid racial ideology thwarts his ability to understand individual agency:

As Coates represents her, this woman is not a morally fallible, autonomous subject with her own biography and neuroses, but a representative of larger, impersonal social forces.... He doesn't appreciate that his disproportionate reaction—"my words were hot with all of the moment and all of my history"—is an unqualified overreaction.... It doesn't seem to strike him that as long as black people can be so easily triggered and provoked...we'll never be free or equal.

Williams's reading of this scene seems to be in bad faith. Bending Coates's passage to his ends, he ignores the subtlety of what Coates is trying to say in that anecdote and in the rest of the book. In that particular passage, Coates is not diminishing individual agency but trying to understand how the woman's reaction is driven by learned behaviors that should give all of us pause. This is one of many moments in which, in an attempt to reconcile history and agency, Coates encourages his readers to consider how the scripts imparted to us by racialized experience sometimes do not suffice. Taken in context, it's a moment when the anti-racist criticism that Williams rails against demonstrates more suppleness of thought than he wants to admit.

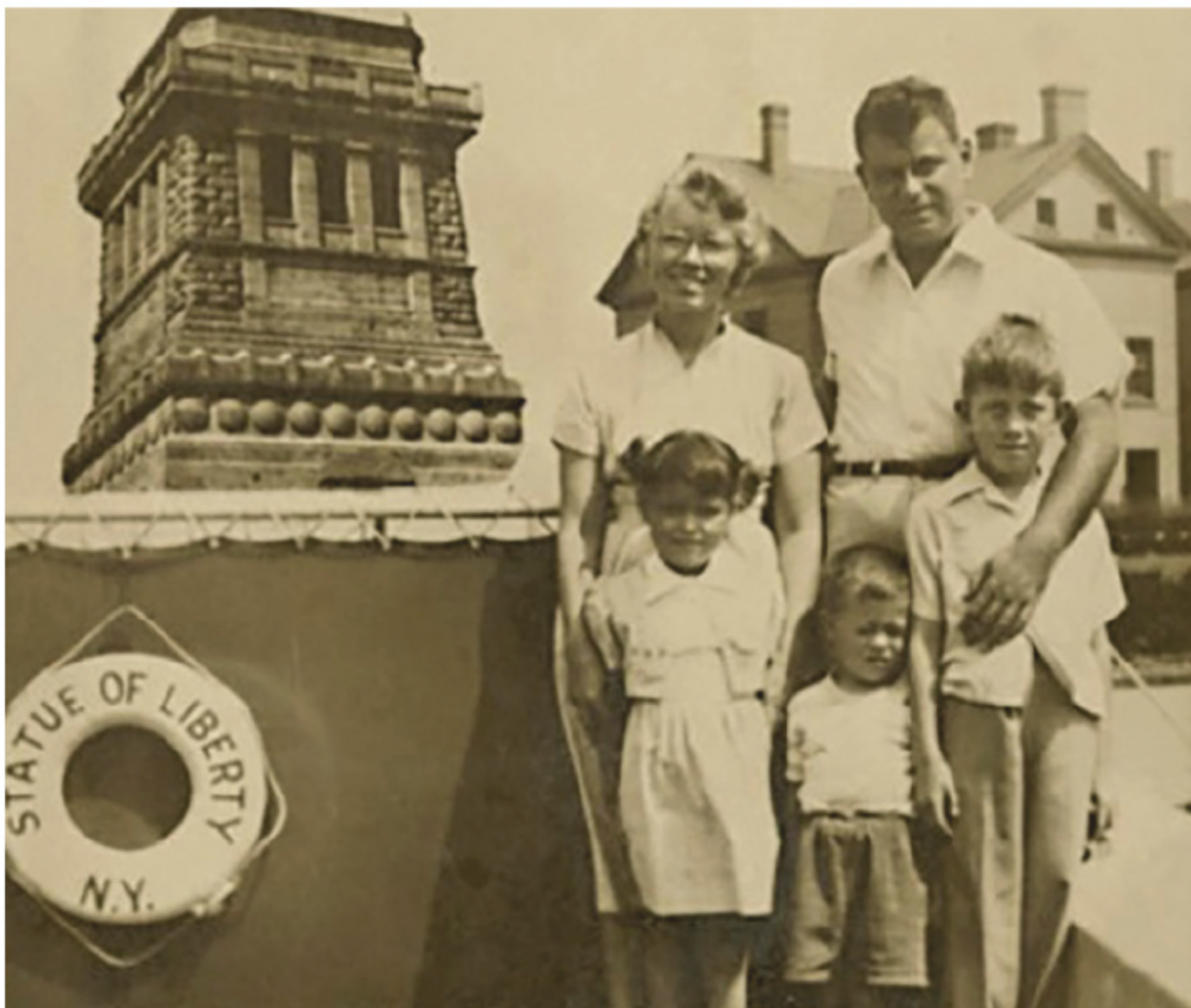
Rather than caricature anti-racist thought, Williams would have done well to turn to writers like Larsen, James Weldon Johnson, Fred Moten, and many other thinkers past and present whose investigations into racial identity have explored the strange dynamic that renders race—particularly blackness—both a transparently constructed and a desirable expression of individual and group humanity. As Moten insists, to understand blackness, we must "consider...the specific interiority of [it]...not to challenge claims of the constructedness of the category but to initiate an investigation into the essence of the constructed in this case and in general." We must, in other words, persist in an anti-racist investigation of blackness, recognizing its constructedness not so we

can escape racial identity altogether but rather view it as a phenomenon that offers tools for collective expression and shared struggle against the social order. Race can be of service to those seeking to exploit, suppress, and dehumanize others; it can also be a means for rehumanization and power. We can begin to recognize this if we take seriously the desire for blackness that Williams dismisses out of hand as worthless. Why do we persist in embracing blackness, and what do we gain from it?

I don't know that anyone can offer a pat answer to that question, but there are many examples of a far more productive line of inquiry than Williams's. Larsen's *Passing* comes most readily to mind, in which the protagonist, Irene Redfield, reels from the sudden appearance of her childhood friend Clare, who has been passing for white and has reappeared in Harlem to rekindle old friendships. Talking with her husband, Brian, Irene wonders why Clare would return and risk revealing that she's been passing. "It's always that way," Brian responds. "Never known it to fail. They always come back. I've seen it happen time and time again." "But why?" Irene demands. All Brian can offer is a provocation, both to her and the reader: "If I knew that, I'd know what race is."

Larsen's novel offers us a compelling study in the power and appeal of racial identity, and it forces us to call into question what many Americans have come to think of as race in a country where black people like Clare pass as white. The existence of black people who do not look black is evidence of American racial ideology's inchoate nature. Brian's provocation suggests that race is less a biological than a social fact. It can also be a zone for Williams's unadulterated sovereignty.

That provocation also reminds us that just because racial identity is a social phenomenon, it does not mean that we would want to—or necessarily can—banish race to the realm of pure fiction. Instead the novel offers us a far more complex conception of identity, one in which passing simultaneously underlines race's status as a social construction and reinscribes it as a very real structure of desire. When Clare becomes black again, it's because she wants something that only blackness can give her and is dissatisfied with what whiteness has to offer. *Passing* suggests that probing racial identity necessitates a probing of this desire, which is also to insist that we cannot dismiss it as false consciousness. Williams would do well to learn from Larsen. ■



THE PROMISE OF AMERICA

A family's misfortunes in the age of McCarthyism

by ANDREW J. BACEVICH

A *Washington Post* editor and two-time Pulitzer Prize winner, David Maraniss is the author or coauthor of a dozen books, including well-received biographies of Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. His latest is a family memoir that Maraniss's publisher describes as a "thank-you note to his father." If it were simply that, *A Good American Family* would be of little interest, except perhaps to the author's kinfolk. But Maraniss has fashioned his book into something much more than an homage to a much-loved parent. *A Good American Family* is an empathetic, though not entirely successful, effort to understand why his parents and uncle were drawn to communism in the 1930s and then why, nearly two decades later, they fell victim to a frenzied government witch hunt that targeted them because of these convictions. If only obliquely, the book thereby takes on two topics central to 20th century

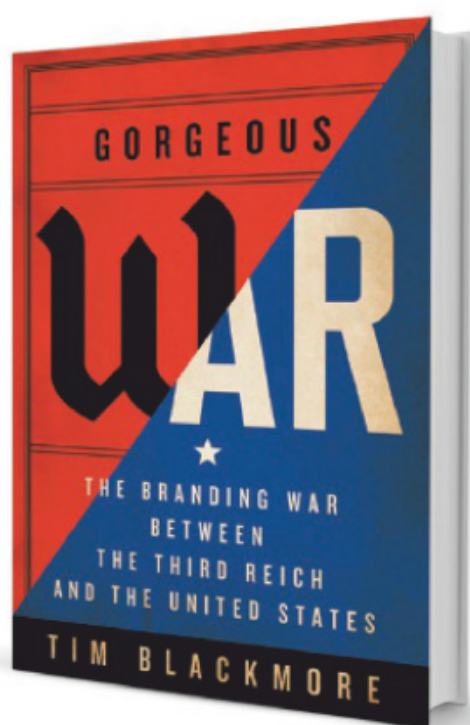
history: the allure of communism during the heyday of the Old Left and the subsequent impulse to label otherwise loyal citizens as un-American because of their radical commitments.

Maraniss is hardly the first person to engage with these questions; whole historiographies have emerged around the influence and legacy of communism, anti-communism, and anti-anti-communism in American life. Yet such questions are salient today, when the evident exhaustion of conventional politics may once again bring more radical alternatives, whether on the left or the right, into play.

In the Red Scare that erupted after World War II, Elliott Maraniss, the author's father, was the smallest of small fry, but his prewar flirtation with communism nonetheless sufficed to get him fired from his editorial position with the *Detroit Times*. Though neither imprisoned nor even charged with a crime—his principal offense was refusing to answer

Andrew Bacevich is a professor emeritus of history and international relations at Boston University.

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Gorgeous War

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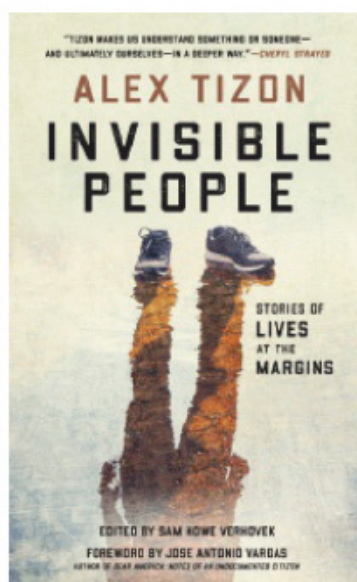
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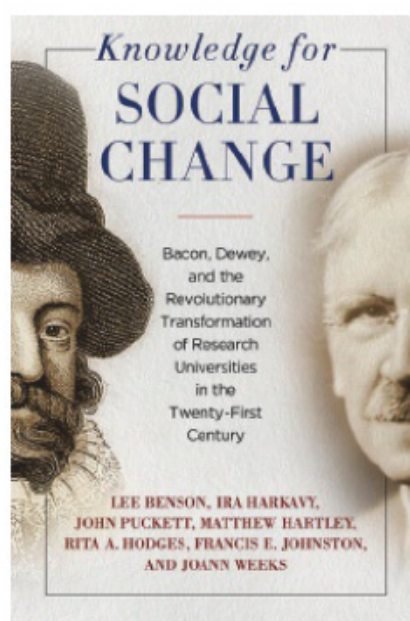
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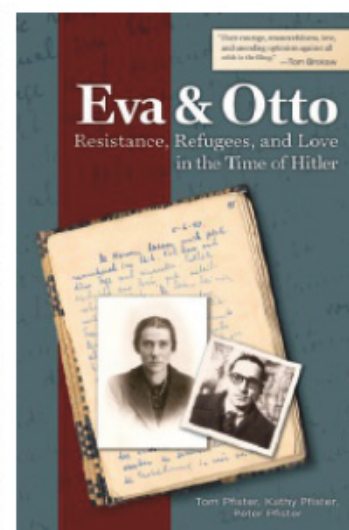
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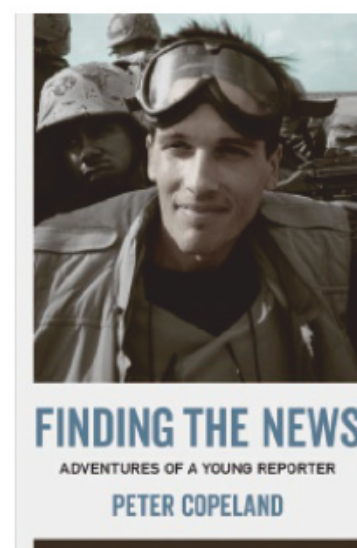
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questions when subpoenaed by the House Un-American Activities Committee, or HUAC—Elliott Maraniss found himself unable for a time to get work. While this derailment caused acute personal and economic distress, it was only temporary: By the late 1950s, he was able to begin what would prove a long tenure with *The Capital Times*, a Madison, Wisconsin, daily with notably progressive leanings. Still, the trauma was by no means negligible, and the pain and dislocations that the experience caused stuck not only with the father but also with the son all those years since.

Born in 1918 to nonreligious Jewish parents, Elliott spent his boyhood in the New York City borough of Brooklyn, where he played baseball and participated in the Boy Scouts. By the time he was in high school, he began to show a knack for journalism. Like many outer-borough kids, Elliott was politically active, participating as a high school student in the massive strike for peace organized by the left-leaning National Student League in 1935.

After high school, Elliott went on to the University of Michigan. There he devoted less time to his studies and more to working for *The Michigan Daily*, the university's student newspaper, as well as to courting Mary Cummins, a townie who was already a professed communist as a teenager. Indeed, radicalism ran in the Cummins family: As soon as he graduated from the University of Michigan, Mary's older brother Robert Adair Cummins headed off to Spain to fight the fascists in the civil war there.

Through Mary and Robert, Elliott soon became radicalized. For all three, there was nothing incongruous about having a commitment to communism, as incarnated by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and to the United States. "They loved the promise of America," Maraniss writes of his parents, but "at the same time wanted to believe in a virtuous, peace-seeking, equality-minded Soviet Union":

They thought they were working toward a true and open American democracy, even as they were rationalizing the actions of what was in fact a ruthlessly totalitarian foreign power. Two opposing ideas, one noble, the other false and naïve, coexisted in their minds.

The signing of the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which saw the USSR enter into a treaty with Nazi Germany, did not shake their faith in communism either at home or abroad. Overnight, Maraniss's

A Good American Family

The Red Scare and My Father

By David Maraniss

Simon & Schuster. 393 pp. \$28

parents transformed themselves from militant anti-fascists into staunch isolationists. In an editorial for *The Michigan Daily*, Elliott called the Allied war against German fascism "a robber's war" between rival imperial powers. Which side would eventually emerge victorious, he insisted, was of no concern to the United States.

Later that year, Elliott and Mary wed. He was 21 and she 18. When Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, they and most other communists instantly revised their interpretation of the war. A competition between rival empires became once again a crusade against fascism, and Elliott "readied himself to volunteer as soon as the U.S. entered the war." To fight for the United States meant to fight for the Soviet Union, and within two weeks of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Elliott enlisted.

Maraniss recounts his father's wartime service in considerable detail. Although Elliott remained in uniform until January 1946, he never engaged in combat against fascists or anyone else. Instead, after earning a commission in the Army's Quartermaster Corps, he assumed command of a salvage repair company, which worked behind the lines to restore damaged equipment to serviceable condition. His unit consisted entirely of black troops, and despite the prevailing practices in what was then a Jim Crow military, he treated his soldiers with uncommon respect.

From Maraniss's account, it seems clear that his father developed into an effective leader and found considerable satisfaction in commanding his company. Elliott's ingrained sense of idealism persisted, even as military service softened its edges. According to his son, Elliott left the Army as something of an "undogmatic optimist." By 1952, the former communist had moved to the political center, preferring Dwight Eisenhower to the liberal Adlai Stevenson in that year's election.

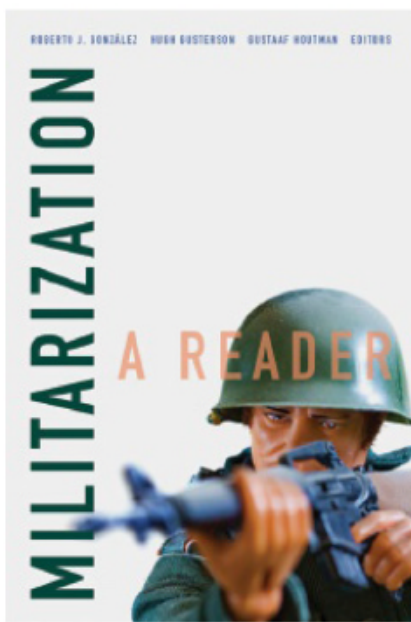
Unfortunately for the Maraniss family, Elliott had years earlier attracted the attention of the FBI, which had put together a file detailing his ostensibly subversive activities. After the war, he was far more interested in major league baseball than in the writings of Marx and Lenin. Even so, in March 1952 he was hauled before HUAC. Citing his Fifth Amendment rights, he declined to answer the committee's ques-

tions. His inquisitors responded to this lack of cooperation by refusing his request to read into the record his eloquently written testimonial to American democracy. The event was a variant of the show trials found in Stalin's USSR. Elliott's unblemished wartime record counted for nothing, and he and his family were forced into several years of de facto internal exile.

Maraniss embellishes this narrative by profiling several of his father's antagonists. Prominent among them were Bereniece Baldwin, who infiltrated the Detroit branch of the Communist Party USA and became a notorious FBI informant; HUAC chairman John Stephens Wood, a stalwart Democrat from Georgia who was a devout racist and Ku Klux Klan fellow traveler (while concealing the unwelcome fact that he was part Cherokee); and Charles Edward Potter, another HUAC member, who lost both his legs fighting in Europe during World War II and later repented his role in the Red Scare, castigating red-baiters as "disgraceful racial bigots and American fascists."

In comparison with these colorful (though not necessarily admirable) characters, Elliott comes across as bland. While very much the "good American" of Maraniss's title, he was not a terribly compelling personality. Reading about the zealots who sought to destroy Elliott's life, one wishes that Maraniss had provided a more convincing explanation for why his father chose to follow the course he did. Certainly for Elliott, Mary, and her brother, the twin shocks of World War I and the Great Depression, along with youthful innocence and a tendency to see only what they wished to see, played a role. Yet Maraniss never satisfactorily explains why they found themselves drawn to communism. Of the motives of Elliott's persecutors, we learn far more: Money, ambition, partisanship, and even boredom, in Baldwin's case, played a role. These are motives many readers can understand; Elliott's remain something of a mystery.

Everyone concerned in these events, even the most cynical among them, saw themselves as genuine patriots. But what they also shared, in addition to a self-congratulatory conception of patriotism, was a susceptibility to dogmatism—a conviction that anyone disagreeing with their position was not simply misguided or misinformed but beyond the pale. Sadly, among some on the left and among many on the right, this inclination persists. ■



Militarization: A Reader

EDITED BY ROBERTO J. GONZÁLEZ, HUGH GUSTERSON, AND GUSTAAF HOUTMAN

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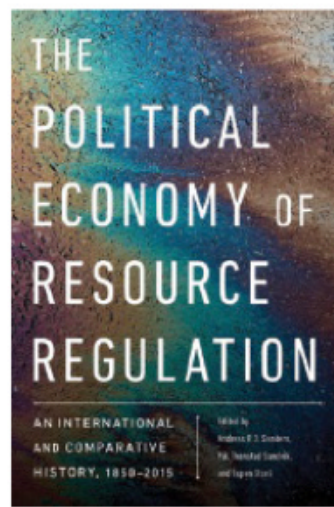
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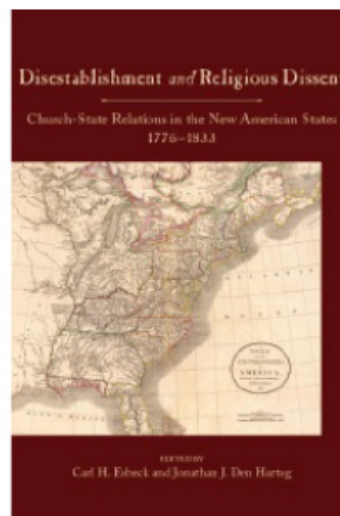
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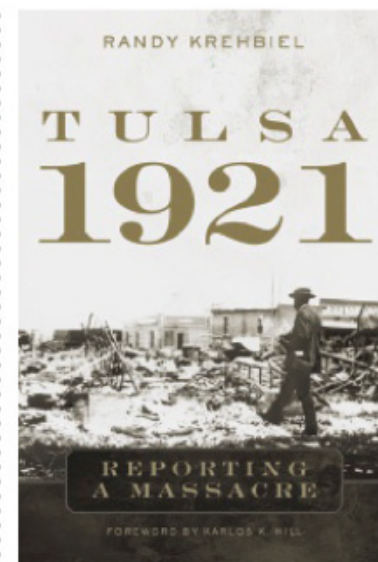
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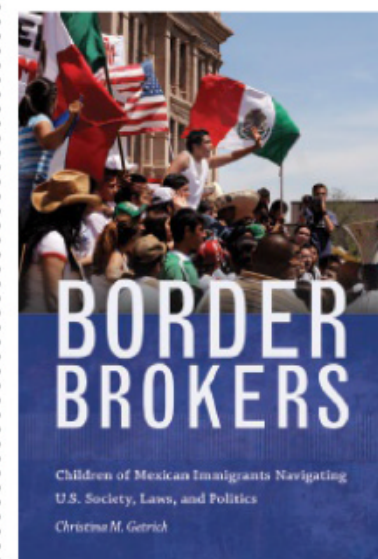
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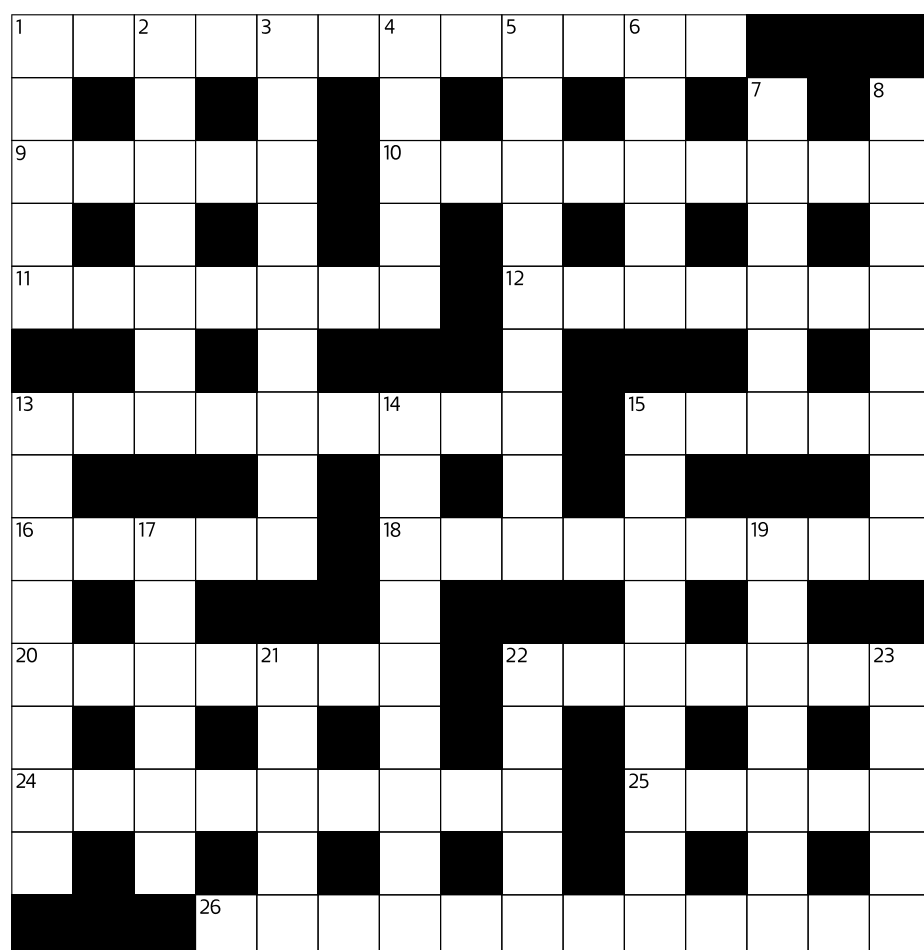
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Puzzle No. 3515

JOSHUA KOSMAN AND HENRI PICCIOTTO



ACROSS

- 1 What you might do with a dirty belt clutched by senior adventurer (12)
- 9 Measure of light feather without first number (5)
- 10 Converse back and forth about attorney general, and start to hack part of document (9)
- 11 Male, frazzled, arrives late to be wed (7)
- 12 Adoring untangled-knot descriptor (7)
- 13 Held in contempt, Caesar returned and ate, repressing onset of anger (9)
- 15 Before one, caress the rear end of Robert Smith (5)
- 16 Hits—they usually come in pairs (5)
- 18 Warm piece of turkey, stuffed with spicy chocolate sauce spun around artichoke heart (9)
- 20 Note: a bit of science in creative endeavors, and they add up to a record (7)
- 22 Hype smooth chief of tiki bar (7)
- 24 Close friend isn't able to limit din of explosion (9)

25 Manchester school, independent leader in public square (5)

26 Will's inadvertent revelation? (4,8)

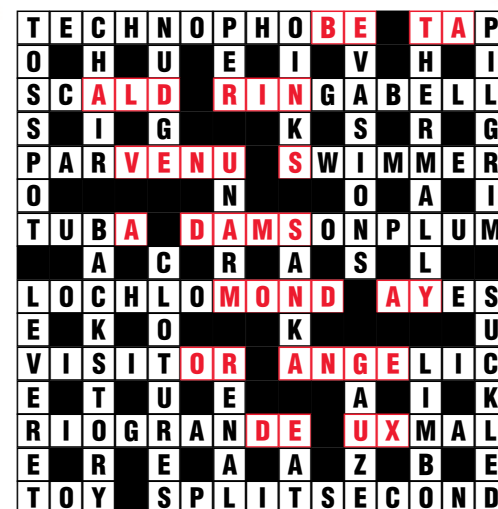
DOWN

- 1 City's transfer of ownership on Monday (5)
- 2 Misread redesigned prizes (7)
- 3 pHysical challenges (9)
- 4 After introduction, had a meal and hiked (5)
- 5 Mathematician's short underwear rumored (4,5)
- 6 Brewed lager for regal, disheveled composer (5)
- 7 Cruel person's publicity is displayed in street (6)
- 8 Intelligent publicity is displayed in article (8)
- 13 Deal with mineral spring in narrow excavation (8)
- 14 Ten swans disrupted opening of digital media distribution center? (9)
- 15 Method to get around editor (9)
- 17 Murderer keeps rubles at first (essentially, legal tender) (6)
- 19 Notices howling presenter of winter entertainment (3,4)
- 21 Usurp bishops' places, by the sound of it (5)
- 22 Creator of a notable dish: tripe stew (5)
- 23 Buzzed, acting generously toward a server? (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3514

ACROSS 1 anag. 7 rev. 9 SCAL[e] + D
 10 RING + ABEL + L 11 P(ARVE)NU
 (pun anag., rave anag.) 13 S(W)IMMER
 14 TUB + A 16 DAM + SON + PLUM[p]
 19 L + OCH(L)O + M ON D 20 anag.
 22 VIS(IT)OR 24 AN(GEL)IC (I can anag.)
 27 RIO (initial letters) + GRANDE (anag.)
 29 final letters 30 TOY[ota] 31 theme reveal

DOWN 1 TO + S(S)POT 2 CHAI + R
 3 NUD(G)E 4 PER[m] 5 O(IN)KS
 6 anag. 7 THE R(M)ALLY 8 PI(L)G + RIM
 12 hidden 15 BACKS + TORY
 17 SANK + A 18 CL(O)TURES (cluster
 anag.) 19 L(EVER)ET 21 anag.
 23 R + ENAL (rev.) 25 GA(U)ZE
 26 hidden 28 [m]EAT



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